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**CASE STUDIES OF INNOVATIONS IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION
IN THE CONTEXT OF SSA**

A REPORT



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Preface

Children are the most crucial resource of the country. A healthy generation of children will lead to a healthy generation of young people who can, in turn, contribute substantially to the social and economic development of the country. In 1986, the National Policy of Education (Programme of Action 1992) accorded unprecedented importance to ECCE and emphasized the need to invest in the development of young children. It recommended a holistic approach aimed at fostering health, nutrition, social, physical, moral and emotional development of child and also emphasized the importance of play in ECCE and cautioned against the dangers of using formal methods of teaching the 3 R's at this stage. The Article 45 of the Constitution of India as amended recently reads as - "***The state shall endeavour to provide Early Childhood Care and Education until they complete the age of 6 years***". This calls for expansion and strengthening of pre-school education in the country.

The early childhood years have been acknowledged as the most significant years in the life of an individual in which small positive changes generate long-term social benefits. The quality of experiences provided to the child during this period has a direct bearing on his/her health, nutrition, behaviour and social interaction and accomplishments in later life. Absence of a suitable environment at home may lead to maladjustments of a variety of nature in later life. In order to overcome this deficiency at home, pre-school education has its contribution to make which addresses to the needs and requirements of children in the age group of 3-6 years and provides a linkage between the home and the formal schooling at primary level. The positive effects of early childhood development programmes on school performance of children have been found to be of great significance. With a view to providing all round development of children and achieving the goals of UEE, opportunities for pre-schooling play a vital role in the organisation of desirable inputs for young children.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which is a massive programme, launched by the Government of India in a mission mode for achieving the goals of UEE acknowledges the need and importance of ECCE for quality elementary education and provides for strengthening of the pre-school component in Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and organising of training programmes for capacity building of ECCE workers. It is in this context that the present study entitled '**Case Studies of Innovations in Early Childhood Care and Education in the Context of SSA**' was conducted by the Department of Elementary Education at the behest of the MHRD as a step towards the initiation of activities in ECCE under SSA. The study aims at documenting the elements of innovations and successful practices in ECCE in the three organisations studied, namely, **Bal Niketan Sangh, Indore; Bodh Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur and Balshala, Lucknow**, with a view to providing insights into some of the innovative strategies, interventions and approaches for implementing quality ECCE under SSA.

The research report in its present form is based on indepth observations, interventions and focussed group discussions with teachers, community, parents and the managers of the organisations under study. It is hoped that the report will be found useful by those working in the area of ECCE in the states and districts in the context of SSA. Comments and suggestions, if any, for further improvement would be welcome.

I am grateful to Prof. J.S. Rajput, Director, NCERT for the kind patronage and support and encouragement provided for the conduct of the study. My special thanks are due to the MHRD for identifying the Department for conducting the study and for providing the financial assistance. I am also grateful to Ms. Shalini Tai, Bal Niketan Sangh, Indore; Shri Yogendra Upadhyaya, Bodh Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur and Shri Kumar Kamlesh, DPEP, Lucknow for extending their wholehearted cooperation in the successful completion of the study. I am thankful to Prof. C.L. Kabu, Project Consultant, Dr. Swarna Gupta, Project Coordinator and Ms. Indira Devi, Jr Project Fellow for accomplishing the task in time. I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express my gratitude to the external resource persons - Dr. D.P. Sharma, Dr. J.P. Sharma, Dr. D.D. Pandey, Ms. Amita Govinda, Dr. Talmeez Fatima, Prof. Chandra Bhushan and Dr. V.K. Bajpai towards finalization of the report.

October 23, 2003

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Abbreviations

AKF(D)	-	Agha Khan Foundation (Delhi)
AKF (I)	-	Agha Khan Foundation (India)
AS	-	Alternative Schooling
AWW/s	-	Anganwadi Worker/s
BEP	-	Bihar Education Project
BNS	-	Bal Niketan Sangh
BRC	-	Block Resource Center
BSA	-	Basic Shiksha Adhikari
BSS	-	Bodh Shiksha Samiti
CARE	-	Co-operative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CDO	-	Chief District Officer
CDPO	-	Child Development Project Officer
DEPC	-	District Education Project Committee
DIET	-	District Institution of Education and Training
DM	-	District Magistrate
DPEP	-	District Primary Education Programme
DPO	-	District Project Officer
ECCE	-	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECE	-	Early Childhood Education
EFAPB	-	Education for All Project Board
F	-	Female
GEF	-	Good Earth Foundation
GOI/UN	-	Government of India / United Nations
GOUP	-	Government of Uttar Pradesh
ICDS	-	Integrated Child Development Services
M	-	Male
MHRD	-	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MIP	-	Mainstream Interaction Programme
MIS	-	Management Information System
MTA	-	Mother Teacher Association

NCERT	-	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NFE	-	Non-Formal Education
NG	-	Nigrani Committee
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
NIPCCD	-	National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development
NPRC	-	Nyaya Panchayat Resource Centre
PESLE	-	Programme for Enrichment of School Level Education
POA	-	Programme of Action
PRS	-	Panchayati Raj System
PTA	-	Parent Teacher Association
RJS	-	Rajkiya Janshala
SCERT	-	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SIE	-	State Institute of Education
SJS	-	Samudayik Janshala
SPO	-	State Project Officer
SSA	-	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
SSK	-	Shishu Shiksha Kendra
TLM	-	Teaching Learning Material
UP	-	Uttar Pradesh
UEE	-	Universalization of Elementary Education
UNEP	-	United Nation Education Programme
UNICEF	-	United Nation International Children's Education Fund
UP EFAPB	-	Uttar Pradesh Education For All Project Board
VEC	-	Village Education Committee
VNG	-	Village Nigrani Committee
WHO	-	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

I Introduction

The Constitution of India made a special provision under Article 45 relating to the Directive Principles of State Policy, imposing an obligation for free and compulsory education for children up to 14 years of age. The Constitution (86th Amendment Act 2002) reiterates the Nation's commitment to provide ECCE vide **Article 45 of the Constitution**, which reads as "*The state shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of 6 years*". This calls for expansion and strengthening of pre-school education in the country

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which aims at UEE by 2010 acknowledges the need and importance of ECCE for quality elementary education and provides for strengthening of the pre-school component in ICDS, building agencies for importance of early childhood development, organizing of training programmes and capacity building of anganwadi teachers. Efforts are to provide universal access to ECCE to all children in 0-6 age group.

In this context, the MHRD found it appropriate to conduct a few case studies of some of the innovative programmes being run by the NGOs in order to study and incorporate the successful elements of innovations in the area of ECCE in the SSA programme. As an outcome of this, three case studies have been conducted, namely, Bal Niketan Sangh, Indore; Bodh Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur, Balshala under DPEP, Lucknow. The main objective of conducting these studies has been to identify the significance of innovations used in respect of successful interventions put in process by these organizations. The elements of interventions such as teacher training programmes, curriculum transaction, teacher-pupil interaction, classroom processes, materials used, etc , have been studied indepth.

2. Objectives

The study was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Study and document the elements of the innovations in ECCE in the selected institutions,
- Assess the contextuality of the innovations,
- Identify the factors leading to the success of innovative practices and their effect on child's life, and
- Assess the sustainability and replicability in the context of SSA.

3. Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the innovative features of the organization under study in relation to certain specific components of ECCE such as curriculum, classroom organisation and management, teacher training, children's assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and community participation?
2. What strategies were adopted in developing effective innovative aspects of the ECCE programme?
3. What processes were adopted for contextuality of the ECCE programme in terms of innovative practices?
4. What approaches were adopted for effective community mobilization?
5. What are the factors leading to the success of the innovative practices and their effect in the child's life?

4. Scope of the Study

In view of the fact that the present study is concerned with the documentation of innovative practices in three organisations, the scope of the study was confined to the elements of innovations pertaining to the pre-school education programme in the identified institutions. The study has thus focused upon major parameters of the ECCE programme that impact upon

quality of education in terms of curriculum transaction, preparation of Teacher Learning Material (TLM), classroom organisation and management, children's assessment, teacher training, monitoring and evaluation, and community participation. These parameters have been studied indepth through - on the spot observations, interviews with field level functionaries including teachers, interaction with community members and through data collected with the help of tools/questionnaires prepared for the purpose. While collecting data, emphasis had been laid upon approaches and strategies adopted by different institutions for bringing about quality improvement in the implementation of the ECCE programme. Detailed information on the target groups covered, efforts for community mobilization and the gains in terms of enrolment, retention and achievement of children have also been gathered.

5. Methodology

The study was conducted under four phases :

Phase-I which envisaged **pre project activities** such as appointment of project staff, obtaining financial sanction from the MHRD, interacting with personal of the three organizations and identifying workable strategies to implement the project

Phase-II of the study included development of tools for collection of data, both primary and secondary. The following tools were developed

- (i) General Information Format
- (ii) Interview Schedule for Officials/Managers
- (iii) Interview Schedule for ECCE workers
- (iv) Interview Schedule for Parents
- (v) Focussed Group Discussion with the Community Members
- (vi) Observation Schedule for the Field Investigator

Phase-III focussed on field visits and collection of data by way of gathering first-hand information through observations by the research team, discussions and interactions with the officials, instructors, teachers and focussed group discussion with community and parents.

Phase-IV of the study concentrated on analysis and interpretation of data (both qualitative and quantitative). The responses were content analyzed and interpreted.

6. The Sample

The relevant instruments were administered to a representative sample of officials/Managers, teachers, community members and parents in the institutions visited. Under each of the three organizations, 6-8 centres were visited and observations made. Efforts were made to interact with all teachers of the centres visited. At each centre visited, Focussed Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with at least 10-12 community members and parents.

7. Criteria of Assessment

The elements of innovations being implemented by the selected institutions for quality ECCE programme were assessed on the basis of a set of parameters, broadly consisting of -

- Curriculum and Teaching-Learning Material
- Classroom Organisation and Monitoring
- Teachers' Qualification, Teacher Training,
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Children's Assessment
- Community Participation
- Pattern of Finance

The information gathered on the above parameters through both primary and secondary data was put together, analysed and interpreted.

8. Main Findings

The three organisations, namely, BNS, Indore; BSS Jaipur and Balshala, Lucknow have demonstrated innovative practices in the transaction of ECCE programme. The conclusions drawn from the three case studies in terms of the parameters studied are discussed below:

Curriculum:

At the **Bal Niketan Sangh**, the curricular interventions have been planned according to the thematic approach, using bottom up approach. The curriculum recognises the importance of development of creativity and integration of various developmental areas. A special feature of the curriculum at BNS is that it is **structured on a continuum from the pre-primary stage to early primary stage for smooth transaction**. The curriculum has elements of innovations in terms of graded material, play toys and user-friendly teaching-learning materials. A redeeming

feature of the curriculum at BNS is the slogan '**Baste ka bhoj halka karo**', i.e., 'No bags in pre-school'. The TLMs prepared have a lot of variety and sequential development order in the material on the lines of the Montessori Method.

The **Bodh Shiksha Samiti** has adopted a flexible approach in curriculum design and operational strategies aiming towards a holistic development of the child. Realizing the importance of **a balanced and healthy growth for children**, the Bodh curriculum for ECCE has given a place of prominence to the **social and emotional needs of children** and devised appropriate strategies/activities to accomplish the same. There is enough scope in the curriculum for the development of basic skills through the process of identification, comparison, classification and sequencing through group and individual activities.

In the **Balshala model of DPEP**, there are two main principles guiding the framework for ECCE curriculum: one, leading **towards school readiness** and the other, **towards socialisation of the child**. The aim is to relate the pre-school curricular interventions to Class I curriculum, particularly Language and Mathematics, thus providing for linkages between pre-school and primary school. The Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) are a collection of masks, puppets, picture stories, picture cards, beads, puzzles, clay, toys, etc. Materials are graded and local specific and cater to the multi-level approach.

To sum-up, it may be mentioned that the three institutions visited show a lot of variations and flexibility in the curriculum and in the preparation of TLMs for the ECCE programme. Individual institutions have come out with their own innovative strategies for contextualising the curriculum and TLM to maintain the local specificity for successful implementation of the ECCE curriculum.

Classroom Organisation and Management:

At the **Bal Niketan Sangh** it was observed that a child-friendly and a loving environment prevailed in all the centres visited. The classes were well organised and well-planned with small group activities and active participation of children. A special feature of the classroom process was the **behaviour of teachers at the BNS centres towards children which was universally observed to be affectionate, loving and caring**. The teachers were found to be sensitive towards the child's needs. Self-introspection done by teachers in their '**do and review meetings**' helps them in the successful implementation of activities. Rooms were found to be spacious for the conduct of activities, both in small as well as large groups. The classes were

found to be neat and tidy with attractive display of material including children's work. Learning corners were seen in the classroom where children were free to play.

Bodh Shiksha Samiti has evolved its own system of grouping of children in the classrooms where the boundaries of grade-norms have been done away with. The advantage of this multi-level grouping is that there is ample scope for **child-to-child learning and socialisation process having positive effect on the emotional development of children**. Children move to the higher levels on the basis of their interest and performance. The conduct of activities focusses on **teacher directed vs. child centered, individual vs. groups, set vs. open, physically active vs. physically quiet and development of body vs. development of mind**. There are learning corners in each classroom where children have the freedom to play and experiment. The TLMs are developed by Bodh teachers periodically and efforts are made to replace the old/worn out material regularly.

Regarding the organisation of activities in the **Balshala model of DPEP, Lucknow**, the ECCE centres were found to be functioning in rooms or in verandahs in the premises of the primary schools. As a result, display of material and children's work, as also shortage of material was a problem area faced by the teachers in the ECCE centres, particularly those centres which were functioning in the verandahs. An interesting feature was the interaction of the ECCE workers with children which encouraged a loving and caring attitude on the part of the teachers. Some features that were found to be lacking in the centres involved proper lighting and ventilation. Regarding the preparation and use of TLM, it was observed that most of the materials used were worn out and needed replacement. However, on interacting with the teachers, it was found that **since there is no proper place for storage, development of material is a slow process and therefore, not enough material were available at the centre**. In one or two centres, children with special needs were also found to be participating in the ECCE programme which is a positive impact in the context of integration of children with special needs.

Teacher Training:

The quality of education provided in the schools depends to a great extent upon the quality of teachers. The quality of teachers, in turn, plays a significant role in the development and growth of children. This, to a large extent depends upon the quality and effectiveness of the training programme being imparted to them, both pre-service and in-service.

The **Bal Niketan Sangh** has devised certain workable training strategies like short-term orientation programmes, academic meetings and '**arranged workshops**' for developing pedagogical skills of the teachers. As is mentioned in the case study, the BNS conducts a two-year pre-school training programme for prospective teachers as a pre-service course. BNS also organizes need-based programmes for their workers ranging from 6-15 days. There are also need-based special sessions arranged for teachers for providing experiences in art, music, health and hygiene. A novel feature of the teacher development programme at BNS is the '**planned interactive sessions**', where teachers, teacher educators, workers, local community groups and experts interact and share their experiences and problems for the improvement of the programme. Additionally, teachers are guided and counseled for appropriate pedagogical approaches at monthly meetings, supervised by a dedicated group of young active group of lady co-ordinators. These meetings, seminars, etc. are mandatory for teachers and workers for giving feedback and for the on-going improvement process.

The **Bodh Shiksha Samiti** in its teacher training programmes subscribes to the theory of the initiation of its teachers into its own philosophy of education and child development practices. According to Bodh philosophy, teacher training is the backbone of any successful education programme. All new teachers are inducted to their philosophy through a training cycle, that is, sequential - the induction course of three months followed by yearly one-month teacher development course and training workshops of seven days for TLM development. There is also a pre-service training course of 21 days duration for mother-teachers followed by a six-day refresher course periodically. **Bodh does not support the policy of recruiting trained teachers**. During the induction course, the teachers share ideas, exchange experiences and introspect on their own role and their own experiences as a child in school. The fresh recruits are indoctrinated in Bodh's philosophy, the principles of which are **relevance, equity, absence of fear and freedom to the child**. The concept of mother-teacher along with a teacher in the classroom is a special feature of the BSS. The presence of a mother-teacher, who is from the same locality helps in creating an atmosphere of love and security for the children. She provides support to the children at the centre in terms of cleanliness, self-help skills, care and use of materials.

The **Balshala under DPEP** is a Government sponsored programme. To strengthen the teacher training/performance, decentralized on-site resource facilities have been created in the form of BRCs and NPRCs in Uttar Pradesh which have been vertically linked to the DIET. Here, the

pre-primary teachers and helpers are appointed by the VECs. In conducting training programmes, the district specific teams of master trainers are put together to train the anganwadi workers and the supervisory staff of ICDS and DPEP. Training for ECCE assumes great importance in the context of capacity building of key functionaries involved in the delivery of ECCE services, which include the ECCE workers and those involved in the supervising and monitoring of ECCE programme. The training focuses upon the centre's management, programme planning, age-wise group activities, use of materials, TLM development, thematic approach and community involvement. The emphasis of teacher training programmes in the Balshala model of DPEP has been on providing joyful and child-centered education to children at the ECCE centres

Children's Assessment:

Continuous and comprehensive assessment is a vital and important component of the teaching learning process. In any educational programme, it is necessary to assess both the implementation of the programme and the progress of the individual child consistently and continuously.

At the Bal Niketan Sangh, there are no tests (verbal or written) to assess children's level of development. Observation of children's behaviour and performance is the main technique employed by the teachers to record the progress of each child individually. The BNS philosophy believes in stress free education for its children and does not use force or punishment.

Remedial sessions are organised without undue pressure on children. Teachers also use indicators for assessing creativity such as novelty, flexibility and fluency in their drawing, painting, story-telling and dramatization activities. Creativity has been given a place of prominence in the BNS curriculum and thus children's arts and crafts activities have been given adequate space in the ECE programme.

The Bodh Shiksha Samiti is of the view that the child has a great potential to grow and develop in a stimulating environment and therefore, he/she should be provided with enriching experiences in a conducive environment, designed for his/her growth. Bodh's philosophy does not subscribe to the view that the teacher is like a doctor who is to diagnose the ailments (or misbehaviour) of children. The Bodh follows a multi-level approach where children are grouped according to their developmental levels and performance. The teachers and co-ordinators at Bodh are oriented periodically towards professional perception of behavioural pointers for progress of the child. In this whole process of children's assessment,

the views of parents and mother-teachers are considered significant since they are the caretakers of their children.

In the **Balshala model of DPEP Lucknow**, standardized tests are not used for children's assessment but a record of systematic observations by teachers is maintained. Teachers also use rating scale to measure broad dimensions of development such as physical, motor, cognitive, creativity, etc. The rating scale used by the teachers is in three parts, specific to each year of growth. Additionally, there are also items for personal data of general nature about the child. The record of these items are kept in the teachers diary which are then discussed in monthly meetings with parents on the one hand and with managers on the other. Remedial measures, if required, are taken accordingly.

Community Participation:

Non-involvement of the community has been a major problem in school education. During the last one or two decades, there has been little or no interaction between the school system and the community. In order to bring about the improvement in the quality of school education, there is a need to sensitize the local community towards educational concerns for the children.

The **Bal Niketan Sangh** has made sincere efforts to establish strong community rapport and organise meetings, *jathas*, *bal melas*, etc. for mobilising the community and their active participation in the ECCE programme. The community has been motivated to provide resources for the ECCE centres such as free use of residential accommodation and the involvement of mother groups in development of teaching-learning material. **Community representation is ensured in the BNS forum through its electoral procedure every two years.** It has successfully brought about community participation by constituting various village and tribal level resource groups from the local community. It has provided opportunities for dialogues between the community, teachers and the centre. An interesting feature of the BNS programme is **encouraging community to participate in the management and functioning of the ECCE centres**. The '*pre-school social groups*' including parents, gram committees and VEC look after health care, hygiene, habits of healthy living and a part of experiential curriculum related to nature study, local folklore, etc. The community members are given two days orientation in child development, play-way activities and health care and they help in the successful management of ECCE programme.

In the **Bodh Shiksha Samiti model of ECCE**, community participation encompasses contributing and sharing of resources and skills to be gained on both sides, i.e., the community on the one hand and the school on the other hand. An important feature of the Bodhshalas regarding the ECCE programme is the building of strong bonds and bridges with the local community. The most distinctive feature of the Bodh Samiti is that its organisation has brought various child care groups under its auspices to work for achievement of a common target which is provision of child-friendly education to deprived sections of the society. Awareness programmes for community elders and mothers have effectively been conducted through planned meetings and informal interactions. Mothers' role in the education of the young is assumed to be of great importance. Bodh has actively organised women's collectives in the form of Mahila Group and Kishori Group. The community has come forward in a big way to support the programmes of BSS and in strengthening the ECCE programme for their children.

Balshala model of DPEP, Lucknow has stressed on sustainability of the programme for which community participation is a crucial factor. Efforts have been undertaken to establish strong linkages between the school and the community with an attitude of ownership of schools and its programmes. Mothers have an important role in the education of their children. Emphasizing the need for women's participation in various developmental and pre-school activities, 3404 Mother-Teacher Associations and 911 women motivator groups have been set up in the entire State of Uttar Pradesh. VEC members have been given training to sensitize the community members towards mobilization of local resources for ECCE. The DPEP has intensified its efforts to reach out to the parents of eligible children to achieve the twofold objective of generating demand for the services proposed to be provided for pre-school education and strengthening ties with parents and the community. Efforts have also been mounted to establish the much needed link with parents and the community to encourage their proactive role in implementing the ECCE programme. Parents and members of the VECs have joined hands in the effort at providing quality ECE services. An interesting feature of the ECCE here was that most of the parents were found to be visiting the ECCE centres to enquire about their child's progress and also help in the functioning of the centres.

On the basis of analysis of data and overall findings, it may be summed up that the three organizations studied, namely, BNS, BSS and Balshala, DPEP have evolved their own philosophies and strategies for the successful implementation of ECE programmes at their respective centres, one thing common among them being the target groups of children of

weaker section of the society to which they are catering. The organisations have done well in terms of taking the ECCE programme to the weaker sections of the society and providing quality ECCE to young children. They have also made efforts in providing linkages between pre-school and primary and aimed at mainstreaming of children.

In conclusion, it may be mentioned that the present study has conducted case studies of three organisations, namely, Bal Niketan Sangh, Indore, Bodh Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur and Balshala model under DPEP, Lucknow. Out of the three, two are NGOs (namely, BNS and BSS) whereas Balshala under DPEP is a Government sponsored initiative and is managed by the State Government of U.P. The NGOs have demonstrated the success of their ECCE programme through active involvement and participation of the community in their endeavour and made provisions for a rigorous monitoring system. A dedicated group of teachers and their caring and loving attitude towards children has gone a long way in the effective implementation of the pre-school programme. The Government sponsored Balshala under DPEP, on the other hand, has also made successful attempts at improving the quality of ECCE, with special focus on establishing linkages between pre-primary and primary schooling.

9. Replicability in the Context of SSA

In the context of SSA, which aims at providing quality elementary education and a system owned and managed by the community, efforts of the BNS, BSS and Balshala have shown how community can be mobilized and strategies devised for providing quality ECCE programme to children. The SSA realizes the importance of ECCE and has made provision of Rs 15 lakh per year per district for interventions in ECCE, which has been envisaged as an innovative activity. It provides for strengthening of the pre-school component of ICDS as well as setting up new ECCE centres. Major interventions proposed will include organisation of training programmes, preparation of advocacy material and establishing linkages between pre-primary and primary for improving the quality of education.

For achieving the objectives of SSA through involvement of the community in management of the school system, the urgent requirement is of equipping communities with knowledge and skills required for managing schools and making them schools of the community, by the community and for the community, including the ECCE programme which forms an important part of the elementary education. This has been aptly demonstrated by Bal Niketan Sangh and

Bodh Shiksha Samiti. Formation of **pre-school social groups** consisting of parents, gram committees and VEC members for the welfare of the pre-schoolers can be considered under SSA. As demonstrated by BSS and BNS, the local community can be motivated for providing a child-friendly education to their children by forming **women collectives** in the form of Mahila Groups and Kishori Groups. These models can be adopted in States and districts under SSA.

SSA realizes the importance of ECCE, which has been envisaged as an innovative activity. Major interventions proposed include organization of training programmes, preparation of advocacy material and establishing linkages between pre-primary and primary for improving quality of education. The innovative practices carried out by Bal Niketan Sangh for teacher development programmes in terms of organizing the '**arranged workshops**' and planned '**interactive sessions**' where teachers, teacher educators, workers, local community groups and experts interact and share their experiences can be well-thought of under SSA for capacity building of teachers.

The role of **mother teachers**, which is vital to the Bodh's philosophy, helps in creating an atmosphere of love and security for children and this can be adopted under SSA by recruiting and appointing 'mother teachers' for ECCE programmes. The 'mother teacher' will not only help the ECE workers in organizing activities in the classroom but also provide security and love to children.

As is clear from the various case studies, the training programmes are self-sufficient and self-contained where teachers are made **self-reliant and professionally sound in pedagogical skills** with regular introspection sessions for teachers aiming towards improvement of the programme. The principle of **relevance, equity, absence of fear and freedom to the child** can be instilled in teachers during their induction/refresher training programmes under SSA, which may act as key factors in the successful implementation of the ECCE programme.

One of the major interventions proposed under SSA is the preparation of advocacy material for quality ECCE programmes. The case studies of BNS and BSS as also Balshala have demonstrated the preparation of material aiming towards school readiness of pre-school children with special focus on **socialization processes** and **appropriate emotional development of children**. The organizations have also shown the multi-level grouping of

children based on their age group (such as formation of **Shishu Varg**, **Bal Varg** and **Swagat Varg** in **BNS** and **Gulab Samooh**, **Kamal Samooh** and **Juhi Samooh** in **BSS**) for which appropriate material has been developed by these organizations. The experiences of these organizations as mentioned in their respective case studies can be considered and replicated while implementing ECCE under SSA.

Finally, the case studies have successfully come out with certain innovative practices in curriculum development, classroom organization and management, teacher training, children's assessment and in the active role of community in implementing the ECCE programme. These innovative practices may be considered, keeping in view the contextuality of the ECCE programme for implementation of the same under SSA.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Background

In the Indian context, Universal Elementary Education (UEE) is an immense challenge given the fact that education has to reach all children. A very large percentage of children coming into schools, particularly in the wake of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), are expected to be from impoverished backgrounds and in most cases, may be first generation learners from poverty settings that do not provide them with the required stimulation in terms of quality adult-interaction and exposure to varied sensory stimulation and to provision for play and learning. Research and field experiences in India have shown that Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) has critical linkages with enrolment, retention, and learning outcome of children as it provides psycho-social stimulation, physical readiness for schooling, nutrition and health care, the factors which impact upon active learning and retention of children in schools

Children are the most crucial resource of a country. A healthy generation of children will lead to a healthy generation of young people who can, in turn, contribute substantially to the social and economic development of the country. But to achieve this, one must pay proper and adequate attention to the children of today. In the words of Nobel Prize laureate *Gabriel Mistral*,

"We are guilty of many errors and many faults, but our worst crime is abandoning the children, neglecting the fountain of life. Many of the things we need can wait. The child cannot. Right now is the time when his bones are being formed, his blood is being made and his senses are being developed. To him we cannot answer 'Tomorrow'".

Learning starts from birth and it is in the early childhood years (0-6) that the foundation for sound physical, cognitive, social, personal, moral and emotional development are laid. A growing body of evidence suggests that health, nutrition and psychosocial processes affect survival and development in the early years of life. The outcomes of these interactions condition the readiness of the child for school and other learning opportunities which in turn influences the child's chances of enrolment and success in primary years of schooling.

Apart from the direct benefits of the ECCE that accrue to the individual child, provision of care and education in early childhood has a significant effect on women's development by releasing women for other productive activities besides child rearing. Further, it also facilitates access of older girls into schools. Given that one of the chief causes of non-enrolment and dropouts among girls is sibling care, the importance of ECCE as a basic pre-condition for enhancing female literacy rate cannot be under estimated.

2. Importance of ECCE

The largest ECCE programme at present is the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). ECCE and pre-school education under ICDS includes non-formal pre-school education, which is a crucial component of the package of services envisaged in ICDS. It aims at universalization and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote and socially backward areas with special attention towards girls. It also provides for joyful, play-way activity and sustains the interest and attention of children. The National Policy on Education, 1986 (POA 1992) accorded unprecedented importance to ECCE and recommended that "day-care centres will be provided as support services for universalization of primary education, to enable girls engaged in taking care of sibling to attend schools and as a support service for working women belonging to poorer sections". It also emphasizes that "a full integration of child care and pre-primary education will be brought about, both as a feeder and a strengthening factor for primary education and for human resource development in general."

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education, 2000 (NCERT) envisages two years of pre-schooling for every child. It states "the experiences to be provided at the very beginning of education play a very crucial role in the development of child's personality and have strong bearing upon later education of children. Learning at this stage may be characterized by group activities, play-way techniques, language games, number games and the activities directed to promote socialization and environmental awareness among children. Accordingly, pleasure, perception and participation need to be duly emphasized. It will ensure readiness to learn among children and reduce unhealthy and harmful load on children whose neuromuscular capacities are not yet adequately developed. Formal teaching of subjects and reading and writing must be clearly prohibited. ECE needs to be made uniformly available to all children of the country to ensure equity"

It has been amply demonstrated in the past that the success in schooling of a child and more so for completion of primary education lies in the readiness or preparedness of the children for schooling. As per the 6th Survey, the total coverage of pre-school children in all kinds of pre primary school is only 25%. 75% of children are not covered through any kind of pre-school education programme. With regards to facilities and coverage of pre-school education, the variation among States are wide and marked. On an average, 70% villages are without pre-school education facilities in the country.

The Constitution of India made a special provision under Article 45 relating to the Directive Principles of State Policy, imposing an obligation for free and compulsory education for children up to 14 years of age. The Constitution (86th Amendment Act 2002) reiterates the Nation's commitment to provide ECCE vide **Article 45 of the Constitution**, which reads as "The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of 6 years". This calls for expansion and strengthening of pre-school education in the country.

The Tenth Five Year Plan acknowledges ECCE as the first stage in the education ladder and reaffirms its priority for the development of ECCE services as an investment in the human resource development of the country. The plan also commits to strengthening the early joyful period of play and learning in young child's life towards ensuring a harmonious transition from the family environment to the primary school.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which aims at UEE by 2010 acknowledges the need and importance of ECCE for quality elementary education and provides for strengthening of the pre-school component in ICDS, building agencies for importance of early childhood development, organizing of training programmes and capacity building of anganwadi teachers. Efforts are to provide universal access to ECCE to all children in 0-6 age group. It is in this context that the present study has been undertaken. The study aims at documenting some of the innovations in ECCE which have resulted in good practices in pre-school education.

3. Significance of the Study

In the last few decades, the significance of ECCE for UEE has been widely recognized and realized by the Government of India and efforts have been made under DPEP to strengthen the component of ICDS. Holistic in approach, ECCE is aimed at attending to all aspects of child development and targets mainly disadvantaged groups of children in the society. In India, various modules have been used for delivering ECCE schemes which are attached to primary schools or to an NFE/AS centre, in most cases it is an ICDS centre (Anganwadi centre) being run under the existing programme. These include a network of ICDS centres, Balwadis and day care centres, pre primary schools, etc. Realizing the importance of pre-school learning and early childhood care and recognizing the continuum of learning and development, all efforts are being planned under SSA to develop an integrated approach to meet the educational needs of the pre-schoolers through

- setting up Balwadies as pre-school centres in un-covered areas,
- generating awareness for ECCE in the community for mobilization of resource backup measures,
- providing intensive planning for ECCE,
- development of materials for ECCE related activities,
- promoting convergence between school system and ECCE arrangement,
- strengthening pre-school component in ICDS by need-based training of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and teachers.

There are many crucial issues related to quality improvement of elementary education which need to be attended to. The issues are provision of minimum resources, community involvement, and monitoring and supervision and enhancement of child development through the use of special material relevant to their age group and developmental stage. The SSA makes a provision of up to Rs.15 lakhs annually for innovative activities for ECCE at the district level, keeping in view the importance of the pre-school activities in building a sound base for quality elementary education during later years.

Currently, SSA has been launched in almost all the States of India with a view to provide quality elementary education to all children to fulfill the goal of UEE by 2010. Keeping in view the urgency of the child's right for survival and development, the Government of India felt it necessary to support and popularize pre-school education through NGOs, philanthropic

agencies and other private sectors. It is noteworthy that there are many eminent NGOs working in the area of ECCE who have shown remarkable commitment, technical know how and success in the area of pre-school education. They have carried out their endeavor for quality ECCE for disadvantaged sections of the society and have shown successful results in limited areas which could be replicated. The distinctive features of some of these NGOs is that they have reached the urban slums and remote rural hamlets with their quality ECE services for implementation. The target groups mostly comprise of deprived sections of the society who are socially backward and ridden with internal conflicts and social maladies. The special feature of their endeavour has been that these agencies after identifying their catchment area of urban slums and rural hamlets have changed the thinking of inhabitants from a skeptic and casual approach to their serious concern for contribution towards providing joyful activities to young children.

Many programmes with ECCE component have been undertaken in the country in the past adopting various approaches and strategies, ICDS being one of them. NCERT has been helping in providing technical support for the pre-school education component in ICDS. In addition, many ECCE programmes have been undertaken by the NGOs as well as under various programmes like DPEP, Bihar Education Project (BEP), Lok Jumbish, etc.

The SSA is a country-wide programme in a mission mode to achieve the goals of Universalization of Elementary Education for all children in the country. One of the major objectives of the SSA is to reach out to the community and provide quality ECCE programme to children in the age group of 3-6 years. In this context, the MHRD found it appropriate to conduct a few case studies of some of the innovative programmes being run by the NGOs in order to study and incorporate the successful elements of innovations in the area of ECCE in the SSA programme. As an outcome of this, three case studies have been conducted, namely, Bal Niketan Sangh, Indore, Bodh Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur; Balshala under DPEP, Lucknow. The main objective of conducting these studies has been to identify the significance of innovations used in respect of successful interventions put in process by these organisations. The elements of interventions such as teacher training programmes, curriculum transaction, teacher-pupil interaction, classroom processes, materials used, etc., have been studied in depth. The objectives with which the study was undertaken and the design of the study are discussed in the next chapter.



CHAPTER II

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER II

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) has been considered as one of the most important inputs for effectively contributing to the realization of the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). It is in this context, that the Department of Elementary Education undertook the present study titled "**Case Studies of Innovations under ECCE**" at the request of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). The study has been funded by the MHRD and was conducted during the year 2003.

Many programmes with ECCE component have been undertaken in the country in the past, adopting various approaches and strategies. As mentioned earlier, ICDS is one of the viable programmes which provides integrated services for the all round development of the child including health, nutrition, child care and pre-school education. The NCERT has been helping and providing technical support for the pre-school education component in ICDS. NCERT is also involved in conducting training programmes for field level functionaries in the area of ECCE, development of ECCE material and conducting researches.

1. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives are to:

- study and document the elements of the innovations in ECCE in the selected institutions,
- assess the contextuality of the innovations
- identify the factors leading to the success of innovative practices and their effect on child's life, and
- assess the sustainability and replicability in the context of SSA.

Based on the specified objectives, the study was designed to seek answers to the following questions.

1. What are the innovative features of the organisation under study in relation to certain specific components of ECCE such as curriculum, classroom organisation and management, teacher training, children's assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and community participation?
2. What strategies were adopted in developing effective innovative aspects of the ECCE programme?
3. What processes were adopted for contextuality of the ECCE programme in terms of innovative practices?
4. What approaches were adopted for effective community mobilization?
5. What are the factors leading to the success of the innovative practices and their effect in the child's life?

Since the study involved indepth observations on the identified parameters in the three institutions, it was essential to visit the institutions and interact with the officials, teachers, parents and community on various aspects of the ECCE programmes. The visit involved indepth observations of the classroom situation in terms of classroom organisation and management, teacher-pupil interaction, transactional strategies, teaching-learning material and effective use of these in the classrooms.

2. Scope of the Study

In view of the fact that the present study is concerned with the documentation of innovative practices in three organisations, the scope of the study was confined to the elements of innovations pertaining to the pre-school education programme in the identified institutions. The study has thus focused upon major parameters of the ECCE programme that impact upon quality of education in terms of curriculum transaction, preparation of Teacher Learning Material (TLM), classroom organisation and management, children's assessment, teacher training, monitoring and evaluation, and community participation. These parameters have been studied indepth through - on the spot observations, interviews with field level functionaries including

teachers, interaction with community members and through data collected with the help of tools/questionnaires prepared for the purpose. While collecting data, emphasis had been laid upon approaches and strategies adopted by different institutions for bringing about quality improvement in the implementation of the ECCE programme. Detailed information on the target groups covered, efforts for community mobilization and the gains in terms of enrolment, retention and achievement of children have also been gathered.

Since the present study is concerned with the study of innovations and elements of innovative practices at the pre-primary stage of education, it is imperative that the objectives, data gathering devices and the factual data collected pertain to definite aspects of innovative practices with reference to the ECCE programme. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the operational definition of the term 'innovation'. The term 'Innovation' as defined at the 13th Regional Consultation Meeting on the Asia Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development, held at Jomtein, Thailand in June, 1992 and adopted by the Grants-in-Aids Committee for experimental and innovative programmes in July, 1999 is as follows:

Educational innovations refer to an idea or practice new to a specific educational context that meets unsatisfied needs. It is the introduction or promotion of new ideas and methods that are devised in education and/or school practices which have a substantial effect on changing the existing patterns of behaviour of a group or groups involved. Innovative strategies imply the development of new ideas which are disseminated and utilized; they usually occur in response to particular problems.

Therefore, the focus of the study is on the new ideas and methods that have been devised by the organisations to improve the status of ECCE in their centres. In addition, the study also aims to assess the contextuality of the innovations and their sustainability and replicability in the context of SSA. Contextuality of innovations here refers to the local specificity and cultural context in which the innovations have been carried out. More specifically, the study aims at assessing the gains/effectiveness of the innovative practices with reference to the local needs and cultural context of the community in which the programme is being implemented.

3. Methodology

The methodology of the study has been discussed under four phases.

Phase I: Pre-Project Preparation

The Phase I of the study envisaged pre-project activities wherein the administrative aspect of the project was considered. This included appointment of the Project Consultant and Jr. Research Fellow as per the requirement of the study. Obtaining of financial sanction from the MHRD was another important aspect of the pre-project activities. Once the project team was appointed, the project proposal was discussed in detail in-house and workable strategies carried out to implement the same. The three institutions identified for the study were contacted and requested to be a part of the study. Interactions were held with the officials of these institutions to finalise dates for field visits by the research team and to make necessary stay arrangements for the investigating team. This led to Phase II of the study which comprised of preparation of tools for data collection.

Phase II: Development of Tools

In order to seek answers to the research questions, as also to realize the objectives of the study, both the primary as well as the secondary data was needed to be collected. For collecting primary data, a set of tools were developed in-house and then finalized in a two-day (5-6 February, 2003) Experts' Group Review Meeting. To cover the various parameters identified for the study, the following set of tools were developed and finalized (**A set of tools can be seen in the Appendices**).

(i) General Information Format

This format pertains to general information regarding the centres visited. This included information on - name of the centre, village, district, State; enrolment figures of children, number of teachers in place; attendance figures; Infrastructural facilities; location of the centre; play material; training aspects of teachers; innovations in the ECCE programme; etc. This format was required to be filled-in by the Principal / Head of the centre visited.

(ii) Interview Schedule for Officials/Managers

This schedule was meant for the official/manager of the management under which the centre functioned. The main purpose of the schedule was to get information regarding the organisational structure of the NGO, financial costs and information on the achievement of the centre in terms of innovation and mainstreaming of children. The items in the format included - year of commencement of the centre; nature of the project (rural/urban/semi-urban/tribal); annual cost per child; goals of the ECCE project (short-term / long-term), qualification of the teacher (academic/profession); staffing position; special innovative features of curriculum; teacher training material; organisation and management of classrooms; monitoring and evaluation; assessment of teachers' performance; existing support services (e.g., health, nutrition, referral, etc.); nature of training inputs; community participation programmes; mechanism of linkage between pre-primary and primary and technical on-site support to teachers.

(iii) Interview Schedule for ECCE workers

This schedule was specifically meant for gathering data from the ECCE teachers/workers and collecting her/his views on different aspects of the ECCE programme. In addition, qualification of teachers, experience in ECCE, views about ECCE and its importance, transactional strategies, organisation of activities, TLM and its use, teacher-pupil interaction, interaction with parents and community, and assessment of children's performance was also collected.

(iv) Interview Schedule for Parents

This schedule was primarily meant for parents of children studying in the ECCE centres and aimed at gathering information on the home environment of the child as also the background of the parents in terms of qualifications, occupation, family income, type of family, interest and involvement of the parents in the education of the child, visits by the parents to the ECCE centre and their views on the ECCE programme being imparted to the child at the centre.

(v) Focussed Group Discussion with the Community Members

This questionnaire was meant to be addressed to the community members in the area where the ECCE centres were located. The items focused upon community's perception and their contribution in the effective running of the ECCE centres. It also aimed at

gathering information on their expectations from the centre and the need of their participation in the ECCE programme.

(vi) Observation Schedule for the Field Investigator

This schedule formed an important part of the study as it was used by the research team in gathering data based on their filed observations. The information gathered through this schedule also served to authenticate the information provided by the community, teachers, functionaries, etc. The observations focused mainly on the location of the centre, infrastructural facilities (whether inadequate, adequate), physical facilities, games and play equipment, etc. The observation schedule also gathered information on the kind of teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom, organisation of activities (small/large group), effective use of TLM and attitude of teachers towards the children and their commitment towards their profession. The strategies for children's assessment, and monitoring of child's progress were also observed.

Once the tools were ready and finalized, the next phase was to collect data from the field. Hence, the Phase III of the study comprised of field visits to the three organisations selected for the study. As mentioned earlier, the organisation selected were short-listed from a list of six organisations proposed in the project. The basis of selection of these institutions was their location being in proximity to the headquarters keeping in view the time constrain for the study.

Phase III: Field Visits and Data Collection

Phase III consisted of field visits to each institutions for collecting first hand information by way of observations, interactions and discussions with teachers, parents, community members, field level functionaries and other officials associated with the ECCE programme. The information was gathered through the different tools, face-to-face interactions, on the spot observation of various dimensions of the ECCE programme, focused group discussion with the parents and the community. The three institutions visited were:

S.No.	Organisations	Dates
1	Balshala, DPEP, Lucknow	3-7 March, 2003
2	Bal Niketan Sangh, Indore	24-28 March, 2003
3.	Bodh Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur	1-5 April, 2003

As per the schedule, a research team comprising of the Project Consultant and the Jr. Project Fellow visited the institutions. The team carried out detailed observations of the ECCE programme in terms of classroom processes, curriculum transaction, teacher-pupil interactions, teacher's attitude, organisation of activities and monitoring of children's progress and community participation. In addition, indepth focussed group discussions were held with the teachers, parents and the community on various aspects of the ECCE programme. The focus of these observations and discussions was to identify the elements of innovative practices in the centres visited and the contextuality of these innovations with reference to the target group. While visiting the centres, efforts were made to establish rapport with the field level functionaries, so that maximum, authentic, relevant and factual data could be easily gathered. Data was gathered from both the primary as well as secondary sources of data.

To collect **primary data** from the three organisations, a common set of tools constructed for the purpose were used, and then analysed for qualitative-cum-quantitative results. The study envisaged gathering information on several aspects related to the sampled innovative project centres such as the year in which the project was launched, number of centres, working days/hours, enrolment, retention, curriculum practices including preparation of TLMs, transactional strategies, teacher qualification, training and salary, community participation, monitoring and evaluation. Data was also required on perception of the managers and workers at the centre regarding mainstreaming both of learners and successful innovations, problems faced and the role of the community in tackling difficulties, if any.

To collect **secondary data**, information was gathered from the institutions in respect of their project title, target groups covered, innovative/experimental features, teacher recruitment policy, training inputs, efforts on mainstreaming of innovations and experiences, and difficulties in implementing of the programme. The information was gathered through reports, project proposals, materials developed, statement of account, etc. The data (primary as well as secondary) was then content analysed to prepare comprehensive case study reports. At the end of the field visits, a comprehensive data bank emerged, mostly qualitative in nature, which required thorough analysis.

Phase IV: Analysis of Data

The last and the final phase of the study comprised of analysis and interpretation of data. Since the design of the study followed a case study approach, the data gathered was mostly qualitative in nature with special focus on innovations. The qualitative data being descriptive in nature, responses were content analyzed. Information sought from the officials and instructors/teachers about their perceptions on the working of the centres was validated by the information sought through observations by the research team during visits to the centres.

4. Sample

The relevant instruments were administered to a representative sample of officials/Managers, teachers, community members and parents in the institutions visited. Under each of the three organisations, 6-8 centres were visited and observations made. Efforts were made to interact with all teachers of the centres visited. At each centre visited, Focussed Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with at least 10-12 community members and parents.

The elements of innovations being implemented by the selected institutions for quality ECCE programme were assessed on the basis of a set of parameters, broadly consisting of -

- Curriculum and Teaching-Learning Material
- Classroom Organisation and Monitoring
- Teachers' Qualification, Teacher Training,
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Children's Assessment
- Community Participation
- Pattern of Finance

The information gathered on the above parameters through both primary and secondary data was put together, analysed and interpreted. Individual case studies of the three institutions have been dealt with in the following chapters.



CHAPTER III

THREE CASE STUDIES

- ♦ *Bal Niketan Sangh*
- ♦ *Bodh Shiksha Samiti*
- ♦ *Balshala*

BAL NIKETAN SANGH

I. Background and Philosophy

Bal Niketan Sangh (BNS), as a philanthropist organisation was established in 1945 at Indore and has evolved over the years as a national level Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) with a vision and mission. Smt. Shalini Moghe (affectionately called 'Tai') is the founding member and presently the secretary of the BNS. Tai initiated the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme under the able guidance of her father Shri Tantiya Sahab Sarwate who is also the sixth signatory to the Constitution of India. The chief concern of BNS is to provide quality pre-primary education and work for the holistic development of children and welfare of women, especially those belonging to the lower socio-economic classes and disadvantaged groups. The BNS centres are involved in providing quality pre-school education to the disadvantaged urban pockets, urban slums, Harijan Bastis and tribal areas through child-centred and child-friendly materials, specially devised by BNS to help children become independent and active learners.

BNS strongly believes that children have infinite capacity to grow. What they need is a stimulating and enriching environment for healthy growth and development.

Bal Niketan Sangh's most appealing feature which attracts children towards the ECCE centres is the **nature of love, security and prepared developmental environment**, which the BNS maintains through out their programmes and activities.

The focus of BNS activities for early child development is on:

- Socio-emotional readiness that prepares children towards a balanced adjustment in society and to work in large group situations,
- Readiness for co-curricular activities that prepares children for participation in games, dramatization, singing and drawing, etc.,
- Health check-up and immunization that promotes good health, cleanliness and prevention of common diseases. (Here, it may be mentioned that the local health centre has co-opted to render health services to children at the BNS centres).

The Bal Niketan Sangh is not only working for the urban slums and Harijan Basti but also for the Scheduled Tribes/Scheduled Castes in the interior, remote scattered areas of the rural and tribal belts of the State. BNS provides free education, care and equipment for the children of disadvantaged groups. However, the Sangh restricts enrolment of children in proportion to the available resources, though against growing demand by parents of lower and middle socio-economic status for pre-school admission to the BNS.

2. Organisational Structure

BNS is one huge resource planet and has 17 satellite centres (Jhula Ghar) running in different communities - urban, urban slums, Harijan Bastis and tribal areas. The BNS also has 111 Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) centres under its purview (The management structure of ICDS centres run by BNS is given in the appendix. The BNS has set up centres in those catchment areas where quality school facilities do not exist to meet the demands of the community. These catchment areas have habitations which are inhabited mostly by people belonging to lower or lower-middle class income groups, unskilled labour and safai karmacharis. Usually, these families leave their children at home uncared for, while going to their work place and also keep the girl child out-of-school, engaged in sibling care at home. With the support of the local community, BNS has established centres at central places in such habitations where children can get free quality education at their doorsteps.

The Sangh through a series of interactions with the community members was successful in sensitizing and motivating the parents and community members for the need and importance of ECCE activities for their young ones. The message travelled far and wide in the city of Indore where the BNS functions, and today, with the sincere efforts of BNS workers, the community is full of praise for the child care centres being run by the Sangh, where their children remain healthy and are in safe hands.

The educational complex at BNS, Pagnispaga, Indore has an ECCE lab-school-cum-resource centre, primary school (classes I to V), teacher training institute for ECCE workers and a senior secondary school. There is also a women's hostel and a workshop for development of Teaching Learning Material (TLM). Another centre is located at Hamilton Road and is at a distance of 5-6 km. from the main complex. It has extended classes I and II for smooth transition from pre-primary to primary and for mainstreaming of children into formal schools.⁴ Both of these centres act as resource centres of BNS at Indore city, wherein experiments and

Innovations are constantly carried out for successfully implementing the ECCE programme and training workers in ECCE. The organisation has its own workshop for development of play material which are used in training programmes/courses for ECCE workers and also supplied to the ECCE centres run by BNS.

The Sangh has its own infrastructure and expertise for organizing child and women welfare programmes. An important feature of the institution is on-campus cultural activities organized for the women and children in the form of Bal Mela, Balika Mela, Teacher's Day, PTA, MTA and VEC meetings. These also act as platforms for sharing of experiences, providing effective linkages between the home, the school and the community.

The ECCE centre at BNS No 1 at Pagnispaga serves the 3-6 years age group in three sections with on-campus primary classes in proximity and is also the ECCE resource-cum-training centre in terms of material development and pedagogy. The BNS No.2 at Hamilton Road serves as a centre for teacher development programmes and also serves the children in 3-6 years age-group along with primary classes to facilitate the mainstreaming process.

3. Network of ECCE Centres

ECCE network centres as run by BNS in the Indore district of Madhya Pradesh has three types of child development programmes implemented under the State and Central welfare schemes. These are,

1. Jhula Ghar
- 2 Anganwadi
- 3 Balwadi

The table given below shows the number of centres under each type and the age-group of children they cater to

S.No.	Type	Number	Age-group
1	Jhula Ghar	17	0-5
2	Anganwadi	111	3-6
3	Balwadi	3	3-6

All the above centres serve urban or semi-urban slum and remote rural children who belong to middle income or lower income group. ECCE is free of cost for lower income group.

3.1. JHULA GHAR: The BNS runs 17 centres on the outskirts of Indore in rural areas. These centres are called Jhula Ghar and cater to children in the 0-5 years of age group. This Jhula Ghar facility for ECCE contributes towards the sibling care of young children and liberates the girl child so that she is in a position to attend school. Given below is the enrolment profile of Jhula Ghars during 2000-01.

Enrolment profile of Jhula Ghar 2000-01

S.No.	Name of Jhula ghar	No. of Centres	Total number of children
1	Bapunagar	2	56
2	Hamilton Road	2	65
3	Village Devguradiya	1	30
4	Village Dudhiya	2	62
5	Village Rojan	1	32
6	Village Sukhaliya	1	30
7	Village Ishwarnagar	1	28
8	Village Kabir Khara	1	34
9	Mahu Sarwan Muhla	2	68
10	Mahu Sanjay Gandhi Nagar	1	28
11	Mahu Pitha Road	1	30
12	Mahu Lalji Ki Basti	1	32
13	Mahu Garibpura	1	35

Average Attendance Status of Children: 71%

3.2. ANGANWADI: The BNS runs 111 Anganwadis under the ICDS scheme in the urban slums of Indore and provides support services to the Anganwadi workers. The State Social Welfare Department (SSWD) in collaboration with MHRD provides play material/kits and activity books devised by UNICEF, Bhopal to each ICDS centre once a year.

3.3 ECCE CENTRE: There are three Balwadis in Harijan Bastis which serve as the ECCE centre and are located in remote rural areas.

3.4. ENROLMENT FIGURES: In the following tables, the enrolment figures are reflected for various types of centres and age specific groups. The categories of centres are ECCE (3-6yrs.), Jhula Ghar (0-5 yrs), and Anganwadi centre (3-6 yrs). The ECCE centres run by BNS were found to have, broadly speaking, three levels of learners placed in their respective age groups, namely **Shishu Varg (3-4 years); Bal Varg (4-5 years) and Swagat Varg (5-6 years)**. The children move from lower to higher levels according to their level of achievement and comprehension of materials to which they are exposed.

Enrolment Status for Years 1999-2003
Bal Niketan Sangh No. 1

Name of the group: Shishu Varg
Age-group: 3-4 yrs.
level- I

Year	No. of Teacher	Name of Sections	Boys	Girls	Total	Teaching pupil Ratio	% Attendance
1999-2000	1	A	10	12	22	1.22	90%
	1	B	12	14	26	1.26	
2000-2001	1	A	18	16	34	1.34	92%
	1	B	19	15	34	1.34	
2001-2002	1	A	16	15	31	1.31	91%
	1	B	17	18	35	1.35	
2002-2003	1	A	14	18	32	1.32	94%
	1	B	23	10	33	1.33	

Name of the group: Bal Varg
Age-group: 4-5 yrs.
level-II

Year	No. of Teacher	Name of Sections	Boys	Girls	Total	Teaching pupil Ratio	% Attendance
1999-2000	1	A	15	15	30	1.30	92%
	1	B	17	13	30	1.30	
2000-2001	1	A	15	14	29	1.29	94%
	1	B	14	14	28	1.28	
2001-2002	1	A	15	15	30	1.30	94%
	1	B	15	15	30	1.30	
2002-2003	1	A	14	16	30	1.30	95%
	1	B	15	15	30	1.30	

Name of the group: Swagat Varg
Age-group: 5-6 yrs.
level-III

Year	No. of Teacher	Name of Sections	Boys	Girls	Total	Teaching pupil Ratio	% Attendance
1999-2000	1	A	14	14	28	1.28	93%
	1	B	14	16	30	1.30	
2000-2001	1	A	15	17	32	1.32	94%
	1	B	15	15	30	1.30	
2001-2002	1	A	17	14	31	1.31	95%
	1	B	18	12	30	1.30	
2002-2003	1	A	15	12	27	1.27	95%
	1	B	11	13	24	1.24	

ICDS Enrolment

Year	Boys	Girls	% Attendance	Total
1999-2000	456	521	73%	977
2000-2001	366	521	75%	887
2001-2002	375	563	75%	938
2002-2003	511	569	78%	1080

From the enrolment figures in the above tables, we find that enrolment for boys and girls is more or less steady. This shows a positive attitude for **gender equity** from parents' perception, specially for education of girl-child. However, the enrolments for three levels are restricted by the admission policy in proportion to availability of facilities. Each child is accorded individual attention. The tables also indicate that percentage attendance of pupils is 90% and above in the three levels, i.e., shishu varg, bal varg and swagat varg. However, in the ICDS centres, the attendance is approximately 75%

Interpretation of enrolment figures

The enrolment figures indicate steady increase in favour of girls. It is believed that the presence of female teachers in the centres has given a boost to girl's enrolment. Further, the young siblings have started coming to the ECCE centres along with their sibling sisters or cousins. In this way, girls have been liberated from the bondage of sibling care at their homes. Additionally, the package of services-health, education, care, immunization and nutrition in operation has been appreciated by the local community, who can go to their place of work without any risk or anxiety. The most important high light of ICDS's merger with BNS has been the identification of under-nourished children and pregnant and lactating mothers. Since it is strongly felt that a nourishing diet is essential to learning, the under-nourished children can be identified and proper meals can be organized for them.

4. Field Visits

The researchers visited some of the centres during field visits and observed the pre-primary education programmes of BNS in the Jhula Ghars, in Harijan Basti (Balwadi) and ECCE centre in Tribal area. These were located in urban, urban slums, Harijan Basti and Tribal areas of district Indore. Some of the salient features observed were:

- (i) Free education to children of low-income groups
- (ii) Full freedom to children to participate in activities.
- (iii) Focus on child-centred teaching learning strategies.
- (iv) Graded teaching-learning material.
- (v) Low pupil teacher ratio.
- (vi) No bags, no homework
- (vii) Flexibility in curriculum
- (viii) Flexibility in timings.

- (ix) No grades or mark sheets for children.
- (x) Inter-linkages of pre-school learning experience with class I.
- (xi) No examinations upto fourth standard.
- (xii) Regular monitoring and evaluation and self-assessment by teacher during meetings.
- (xiii) Community participation through Nigrani Groups, Village Education Committees (VECs), PTAs, MTAs etc
- (xiv) Daily joint planning by teachers regarding daily timetable
- (xv) Notes recorded for implementation and reviewed at the next meeting by teachers for improvement in quality of ECCE programme

During interactions, the team was informed that 90% the BNS centres are located in sub-urban areas of Indore. In most of the interior areas, the community has come forward and offered their houses, free of cost, for use for the pre-school programme. **A very encouraging fact reported by the BNS workers was that approx. 99% of children studying at the BNS centres are mainstreamed into formal schooling, with the exception of those children who leave pre-school centres due to the mobility of their parents for change of their work place.** It was heartening to find that in most of the centres visited, the children were found to be very happy, excited and participated fully in the activities being conducted. They seemed confident and enjoyed the activities they were involved with.

4. Observations

During field visits, observations were made on the following parameters

1. Curricular
2. Classroom Organisation and Management
3. Teacher Training
4. Children Assessment
5. Monitoring Mechanism
6. Community Mobilization

A brief description of each follows:

5.1 Curriculum

From the study of the curricular material, it was found that the curricular items have been planned according to the **thematic approach**, using bottom-up approach in order of complexity at the conceptual level. The curriculum is structured on a continuum from the early childhood stage to the early primary stage thus facilitating smooth transition of children from pre-school to primary. The curriculum recognizes the importance of development of creativity and integration of the various developmental areas and provides for sequential order of activities through play-way methodology.

The curriculum is child friendly and activity oriented, having scope for self-learning and peer tutoring as well. No books are used and a redeeming feature of the curriculum at BNS was '*Baste Ka Bojh Halka Karo*', i.e., no bags in pre-school which is in accordance with the Yashpal Committee report. Children learn through play-way activities leading to their overall development and emotional well-being.

The curricular materials are developed at the Campus Workshop situated in BNS No.1 under cost-friendly and scheduled programmes under the able guidance Ms. Shalini Tai. A group of women workers are given training on the campus in the development of curricular teaching-training material. These workers are given additional remuneration as and when the need arises. The materials and kits developed in these workshops are supplied regularly to satellite centres of the BNS (designated as Jhula Ghars).

On examining the TLMs, it was observed that there is a lot of variety and sequential development order (on the lines of Montessori method) in the materials. The focus of the curriculum is on child-centred activities that recognize the importance of development of creativity in young children. The curriculum promotes development of children in the following six domains, namely, personnel awareness, emotional well-being, motor skills, socialization, communication and cognition. Specific materials have been devised for language, motor, cognitive and socio-emotional development in children. These include:

- Activity books
- A set of books on stories, rhymes, riddles, songs,
- Children's games and toy
- Graded set of picture dominoes

In addition, a comprehensive list containing play toys, puzzles, outdoor play equipment is also supplied to the ICDS centres.

While developing curricular material, waste materials such as toothpaste caps, lids, thermocol, blackboard covers, broken bangles, plant and fruit seeds, coconut crust, plastic waste toys etc. are also used. Graded material is used at the three levels with increasing complexity, e.g. knowledge about birds in Shishu varg (age 3+); knowledge about birds and animals in the Bal varg (age 4+); and its extension in the form of classification of birds, animals and plants in the Swagat varg (age 5+)

On the whole, it can be said that the curriculum is child-friendly, has enough scope for flexibility and has **elements of innovations in terms of graded material, play toys and user-friendly materials**. The curriculum design reflects spiral and schematic approach in the content of activities and methods of delivery, which is linked to the development of child. There is increased emphasis on teacher's role that is properly oriented through continuous interactions and reflection meetings in '**Do and Review the Results**' programme.

Learning materials are specially developed. There is sufficient flexibility in the programme in order to have a **balance between child initiated and teacher directed activities**. Learning involves working with themes about the child's environment and objects in the child's environment. There is scope for child-to-child talk in groups and teacher - child talk in the classroom. The settings of the material are carefully planned. Personal and social development runs like a thread through every curriculum material. Language and literacy are emphasized in Swagat Varg age group where with the use of story telling and singing of rhymes, children develop skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. The curriculum works on a continuum of graded experiences for formal school readiness. Vocabulary extension, grammatical awareness and understanding of print are taken at the higher age group in Swagat class. Mathematical ideas are based on shape, size, weight and capacity to convey the ideas of quantity. The child is surrounded by mathematical ideas in a prepared environment of materials. There is variety and sequencing in materials. The play material is indigenous and prepared by the BNS teachers under the guidance of coordinators or professional colleagues.

Ample provision is also made for providing young children with opportunities for learning music, drawing, art and crafts. To sum up, it can be said that the curriculum caters to the over-all developmental needs of the children in the age group of 3-6 years.

5.2 Classroom Organisation and Management

On a visit to the classrooms, the first impression one gets is that of a well-planned, clean and safe environment where the children and the teacher are engrossed in the classroom activity, and the children are happy and seem to enjoy the work at hand.

The ECCE centre at Bal Niketan No.1 is located in a big hall, where children are grouped level-wise, i.e. 3-4 yrs, 4-5 yrs. and 5-6 yrs. Each level has two sections. The children are seated on chairs in groups. At one corner of the hall is a Doll's house next to where the shishu varg is sitting and in the opposite corner are the puppets.

It was heartening to note that the display in the classroom was attractive in the form of charts, toys, children's drawings and play material. An interesting feature was that all around the wall, at the height of the children, there was ample space (blank) for them to scribble and draw. The display was also mostly at the eye level of the children. A variety of play material, in accordance with the developmental level of the child, was available for children at the centres, which was used freely by children.

Regarding conduct of activities, it is to be appreciated that there was enough space at the centre for indoor and outdoor activities. Children of different age groups were found to be involved in various activities, both indoors and outdoors at the centres visited.

An important aspect of the classroom processes observed was the **teacher's behaviour** towards children. It was universally observed that the teachers at BNS, by and large, are affectionate, loving and caring and exhibit a feeling of warmth towards children. They are dedicated, committed and motivated. Teachers' communication and interaction with children is very important. It was heartening to note that the teachers at BNS are very sensitive to the child's needs and interact with her/him in a polite and friendly manner. The researches found the teachers kneeling besides children helping them out with activities as and when required. Teachers' behaviour is an important component of teacher training, where the teachers are oriented and sensitized towards this aspect.

The teachers speak in a very polite and meaningful way in the classroom, and move to each child to accept and lead them solve the problems while conducting the activities or in playing with the materials. The children also do not hesitate to ask their teachers for guidance and clarity if they find any difficulty in between the activities. Teachers also reinforce the children with a pat on the back and encourage them to do the activities with self-effort and initiative. The children happily follow their teachers. The children also do 'Namaste' to their teachers one by one bowing before them at the start of the session and touch the teachers' feet to receive blessings while going back home at the close of the day's session, which has roots in Indian Culture. This initiation carries a happy impact on the child's mind, as a result of which the child learns to respect the teachers. This is a daily feature at the centre.

On our visit to one of the Balwadis, located in the Harijan Basti we found children belonging to the Harijan Community attending the Balwadi. The centre in Harijan Basti started on the demand of the Harijan community who have allowed free use of the covered accommodation for the centre. It was learnt that the community did not favour the opening of the centre in the beginning, may be because of their cultural lag but eventually they supported and valued the service of the centre on the plea that when they go to their work place and leave their children behind, they will be looked after at the ECCE centre which is a safe and healthy place. Now the parents have realized how important the centre is for the developmental aspects and healthy growth of their children. They are very cooperative as the centre runs very well and the children are getting free education and care at easy access. Children attend the centre regularly and punctually with parental support.

A community youth of Senior Secondary School who passed out of the centre reports:

"I belong to the same community as Harijan and I am from the same environment. It gives me a sense of satisfaction and recognition that I have come out from this centre and completed matriculation successfully. Now I am a student of arts in the Government Senior Secondary School at Indore. I believe that the centre is contributing to a good cause of education for young children. The people here are mostly Safai Karamchari. They have no time to look after children. I am happy to see

that the children spend at least 4 hours a day at a safe and healthy place with a caring teacher. The parents leave them in the morning at the ECCE Centre and women helper gets them back after school to home. I see a positive performance from the workers."

5.3 Children's Assessment

Continuous assessment is a vital and important component of the teaching-learning process. It is necessary to assess both, the implementation of the programme and the progress of the individual child, consistently and continuously. At the BNS, the teachers were observed to be using a variety of assessment techniques to assess children's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development. There are no tests, verbal or written, to assess children's level of achievement. **Observation of children's behaviour and performance is the main technique employed by teachers to record the progress of each child individually.** Teachers were found using '**Pragati-Patra**', a check-list for evaluating the learning outcomes of children and then reporting the same to parents. The progress card (or the '**Pragati-Patra**') is a simple rating scale tool, wherein the personality trends, behavioural trends and the learning outcomes against various developmental areas are rated on a 3-point scale. There are no scores given and grades are discouraged. The purpose of this assessment is to plan for the improvement and enrichment of short-comings in a child and to stimulate further growth and development by devising appropriate experiences for each child.

Teachers also use indicators for assessing creativity like novelty, flexibility and fluency in their drawing, painting, story-telling and dramatization activities. **Creativity has been given a place of prominence in the BNS curriculum and thus children's arts and crafts activities have been given adequate space in the ECE programme.**

The BNS philosophy believes in **stress-free education** for its children and does not use negative yardsticks such as force or punishment. No adverse remarks are given on the progress card. The progress of each child is shared with her/his parents on a continuous basis and corrective measures are taken collectively for the betterment of children. Every day, at the end of the session, the teachers meet for an hour and jointly plan for the next days schedule and also assess their students' performance and provide for improvement of children who need that reinforcement. Remedial sessions are organized without undue pressure on children.

5.4 Teacher Training

The quality of education provided in the schools depends to a great extent upon the quality of teachers. There are a number of factors affecting teacher quality, such as level of academic qualification of teachers; quality and type of professional training the teachers receive; willingness of teachers to adopt new styles of teaching-learning and professional attitude of teachers. The qualities of teachers play a significant role in the development and growth of children. This depends to a large extent on the quality and effectiveness of the training programmes being imparted to them, both pre-service and in service.

The organisation conducts 2 years training course for ECCE workers. Further, the organisation also provides training to the Anganwadi workers for 3 months as induction course under ICDS. Additionally, 6 days need based training workshops are arranged in specific areas for teachers, supervisors and helpers by turns. This is a major vehicle to promote development of skills amongst teachers for handling children in the Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes.

It is difficult to assess the quality and effectiveness of training programmes that impact upon the performance of teachers in the classrooms. The private organisation and NGOs do not see a great amount of merit in recurrent in-service training programmes as they are not cost-friendly. Also, teachers have to be called during vacations or on school-days for these short-term courses, which affects the teaching of classes or at times the teachers are not willing to attend training programmes during these vacations. Therefore, the BNS has devised certain workable training strategies, like short-term orientation programmes, academic meetings and **'arranged workshops'** for developing pedagogical skills of their teachers. All categories of teacher, co-ordinators and other functionaries come in batches to the BNS centre, and with the help of discussions and inbuilt self-assessment procedures, **they themselves act as resourceful strategies to update their knowledge and solve difficulties found in day-to-day transactions.** Thus, the teachers are oriented towards new ideas and programmes, at times with the help and guidance of professionals and supervisors. Occasionally external experts are invited from NIPCCD, NCERT, WHO, UNICEF and other National/State level organisations to upgrade teachers' knowledge and skills. The training programmes have to be attended by teachers as a matter of policy.

The training programmes/workshops at BNS are residential in nature and are held at the teacher training institute of BNS, Indore. In addition, two-day meetings are also held every month on the 26th and 27th of the month, to discuss issues and difficulties pertaining to the ECCE programme. These meetings are non-residential.

5.4.1 Type of Training Programmes of BNS

The BNS conducts a two-year pre-school training programme for prospective teachers as a pre-service course. The focus of this pre-service training is on early child development and care, health and nutrition, organisation of play activities, practical work, development of material, etc. Practice teaching and actual classroom observations form an integral component of this training programme. In addition, field visits, community meetings, parents meetings, organisation of Bal Melas, exhibitions, Nukkad Nataks also form an important part of the programme. The whole course is divided into four semesters and the examinations are conducted by the Madhya Pradesh Secondary Board of Education. Practice teaching component is carefully structured and in-built in the course to give a sound base in ECCE to the learners

In addition to the pre-service programme, BNS also arranges in-service programmes and workshops from time-to-time as and when the need arises to update their teachers' knowledge in newer technique in ECCE and pedagogical improvements. The training scheme of BNS is presented below in the table:

Type of Training by Bal Niketan Sangh (BNS)

S.No.	Training Schemes	Minimum Qualification	Duration
1	Pre-school Training	10th Passed	2 years
2	ICDS induction course	10th Passed	3 months in 3 phases in a year
3	Need Based In-service training workshop for a. ECCE workers b. Anganwadi Workers c. Supervisors d. Helper	Already in service	a. 7 days b. 15 days c. 7 days d. 7 days

BNS appoints trained teachers for their ECCE centres. The essential minimum qualification for ECCE workers is matric with Montessori training or its equivalent. For ICDS workers, there is the induction programme of three months. The helper is given seven days orientations course regarding child care, health and hygiene.

Regarding the salary structure of teachers, at present the teachers are paid Rs.2000/- per month, ICDS workers are paid Rs.800/- per month and the helper is paid Rs.300/- per month. There is a 10 % increase per year subject to the performance appraisal.

It may be pointed out here that an innovative and novel feature of the teacher development programme is the "**planned Interactive sessions**" held at BNS under the guidance and chairmanship of Ms. Shalini Tai where teachers, teacher educators, workers, local community groups and experts interact and restructure their field monitoring mechanism. Additionally, teachers are guided and counselled for appropriate pedagogical approaches at monthly meetings, supervised by a dedicated group of young active group of lady co-ordinators. On site guidance to teachers is provided by their co-ordinators. In addition, the Village Nigrani Committee (VNC) is an additional support for monitoring.

5.5 Monitoring Mechanism

An important issue which came up during interactions was the **monitoring of performance aspects** of teachers. Monitoring of teachers' performance becomes necessary to maintain efficiency in the process of delivery and transaction of curriculum and to achieve targets within the time-frame. BNS has generated an **internal system of monitoring** wherein the **workers are motivated to develop a working drive within them and a keen sense of self-appraisal**. In the words of Ms. Shalini Tai "***We are not government functionaries who work merely to achieve targets and fill records. We are voluntary workers who have the responsibility and commitment to provide the best services to the needy women and children without being disenchanted with situational difficulties***". Thus, missionary zeal is impressed upon teachers, co-ordinators and supervisors of the Sangh, who in turn, exhibit a sense of dedication and commitment towards children and their well-being. The good workers are awarded by their officers and visitors to the Sangh. Regular demonstrations are given to the workers as to how to improve their performance and thus work in an efficient and effective manner.

Further, there is a Nigrani Committee in every village constituting a selected group of eleven men, women and adolescent girls from the community to monitor the functioning and performance of the pre-school centres. This is a very positive step towards community ownership of pre-school education undertaken by the Sangh. The Nigrani Committees (NCs) and the Village Education Committee (VECs), in the rural areas of which the village Sarpanch is the Chairperson, constitute 50% women members. These groups visit the pre-school centres from time-to-time to oversee the presence of teachers and the functioning of the centre. They also support the education of children by making contribution through making arrangements for provision of physical facilities like fans, electricity, drinking water, toilet facilities, preparation of material and sharing of curriculum transaction in the classrooms by participation in activities like folklore, singing, dancing, etc. This encourages children towards participation in activities related to their local culture.

There is a strong sense of team work and team building among workers, where there is a common goal achieved through shared tasks and responsibilities, through daily meetings. **The whole set up of the Sangh management is democratic and conducive to team work within the set goals of the organisation.** It may be pointed out that the task of monitoring, be it teachers' performance or the functioning of centres is carried out effectively and in a cost-friendly manner through shared reflections, scheduled meetings, introspection by teachers and on the spot guidance (on site support), thus largely reducing the complexities of inspection and supervision.

To sum up, it can be said that the BNS has an effective system of monitoring and supervision, making it cost-effective and aiming towards the overall improvement and successful implementation of the classroom transactions. The trained teachers are continuously upgraded and incentives provided to teachers for achieving better results and for adopting a caring and affectionate attitude towards children. The sole objective of this kind of monitoring is to improve functional efficiency and achieve cent percent mainstreaming of children with the active participation of the community.

5.6 Community Mobilization

Non-involvement of the community has been a major problem in school education. In the past, there has been little or no interaction between the school system and the community. Unlike other social institution in the village, the school has not been closely integrated with the local

community. The school premises in a village are viewed as Sarkari space created from outside over which the villagers have little or no control. **Under the Panchayati Raj System, it is found necessary to create community-ownership-school interface. This will be possible only by ensuring community participation in school management and monitoring of the education system.** There have been community-based initiatives taken recently in different States for strengthening school-community relationship, empowering VEC or Gram Sabha members in school management. But in under-privileged urban areas or rural habitations, the problem of committee involvement is complex and varied. The people living in slum areas and rural hamlets come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Because of their cultural lag and wide socio-economic differences, a large number of girls or special need children remain out-of-school. Many of these community groups require a long-term support system to instil confidence and initiative in them for a responsible role in village education. BNS have given ample recognition and place of dignity to local social groups to build up their confidence and interest in child development programmes.

The local community has been sensitised in a series of meetings by BNS management and their representatives. The organisation has established a strong community rapport through monthly meetings with the community groups. The workers demonstrate the need for education at an early stage for the school readiness of children. The community has been motivated to provide free use of a room at their residence for running the centre for their children. Each centre has one teacher and one helper. The helper collects and brings the young children to the centre and drops them back at their respective homes. She helps children for cleanliness and self help activities.

BNS appears to have brought about community participation successfully by constituting various village and tribal level resource groups from the local community. Direct interaction of management with these resource groups or their leaders has largely been successful in eliciting community support and awareness.

Community representation is ensured in the BNS forum through its electoral procedures every two years. Further, in many rural areas the community has allowed free-use of its residential space for ECCE Centres or Jhula Ghar or Balwadis to run for 4 hours. It may be visualized that ECCE Centre or Balwadis are run in residential spaces of the deprived sections of society and

located in unauthorized or slum areas where there is already a paucity of space. This type of an arrangement has created a positive impact on the community and the Sangh management interface. It has provided opportunities for dialogues between the community, teachers and management coordinators and collective efforts are being made to improve the surroundings of the centre. At many places, the teachers of the nearby primary schools, adolescent girls, local village elders and members of Nigrani committee assist the BNS teachers in the classroom in their leisure hours by enriching the curriculum transaction through local folklore, songs, etc. In this way, BNS has been able to establish an effective community support system for their ECCE centres. At Harijan Basti, the community members met the team and expressed their views that **"the centre is an asset to the children of this locality. It is atleast a healthy and safe place for our children when we have to leave home for work. Our children are in safe hands and stay in a healthy and enriched environment when they are at the centre"**.

The opportunities for members of the community to participate in the management and functioning of ECCE centre exist under all the programmes run by BNS, Indore. There is ample opportunity and scope for the participation of parents and other community members in the learning processes organized by BNS. **The 'pre-school social groups' including parents, gram committee and VEC members look after the health-care, hygiene, habits of healthy living and a part of experiential curriculum related to nature study, local folklore, etc.** The outstanding feature of the 'social group' meetings is that these are well-planned with freedom and flexibility of ideas and action supported by implementable strategies. The parents' views are given due consideration.

The local social groups who work in collaboration with BNS management representatives are periodically constituted through election procedures. They have meetings with the management regularly after every two months. The members can visit the centres at any time for assistance and surveillance. They are given two days orientation in child development, play way activities and health care. They are also encouraged to arrange health care services for children from the village while the adolescent girls of Nigrani Group are encouraged to assist literacy programme of the early child care centre. The community also contributes towards material development at the centre. There are many instances where the Sarpanch of the village has contributed towards the cost of physical facilities, fans, sets of utensils for drinking water and crockery at the pre-school centres.

6. Pattern of Finance

Not much information was available to make an accurate determination of cost and pattern of financing. The main elements in the costing are the human resources, material, equipments and contingencies. The income of the organisation is from several sources, which include grants from MHRD, State Government Grants, collections from the community, other fund raising activities by itself and Grant's from Central and State Social Welfare Departments. **It has been demonstrated that the child care programmes run by BNS are cost friendly in terms of indigenous materials, building structures and professional services.**

The management of BNS has been able to convince the community for offering free use of their accommodation for ECCE centres. Also, the BNS uses locally available play materials and mutually share equipment provided for pre-school and for extended class I and II in the neighbourhood. Recurrent in - service training programmes have been replaced by **reflection meetings of expert core group with teachers and community elders**. The academic and administrative staff have been kept at minimum essential and delegation of tasks are planned and well coordinated.

The cost per child utilized appears to be reasonably satisfying in terms of operational services at the centres ranging from Health Service to the provision of ECCE programme. The whole gamut of services is an active partnership between governmental and BNS organisational structures, working efficiently down to the grassroots levels.

Approximate expenditure for a centre per month is estimated as under: -

1.	Salary of Teacher	Rs. 3000/-
2.	Salary of Helper	Rs. 600/-
3.	Cost of TLM material	Rs. 50/-
4.	Contingencies	Rs. 100/-
5.	Over head charges in terms of workshop meetings and Honoraria to experts invited as per schedule.	Rs. 300/-
Total		<u>Rs. 4050/-</u>

7. SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF BNS

- **Bal Niketan Sangh has launched Child Development and Care Programmes for children of middle class, low income sections in remote village hamlets and tribals groups. The package of programmes organised by BNS and its delivery at resource centre No. 1 in Indore city, ECCE No.2 at Hamilton road, Indore, 17 Jhula Ghars in semi-urban areas and 111 ICDS centres in scattered hamlets of Indore district is working efficiently in a collaborative effort under the leadership of BNS management and community support.**
- **The scheme in itself is an innovation in terms of optimum utilization of space, geared up community support system and mobilization and convergence of BNS consultative efforts. These efforts have been successful to a large extent. On the campus there are various structural units for teacher trainings, TLM development, primary school education, ECCE centre and these units work together under the academic umbrella of BNS for enhancement of child development activities and achievement of results.**
- **In spite of structural differences of sponsoring agencies for the various programmes, the process aspects share many commonalities. BNS takes forward the programmes to serve weaker sections of the society. The programmes have an outstanding group of lead-coordinators who follow participatory style. There is no bureaucracy, so the communication is smooth. The ECCE workers and coordinators are able to interact with the parents, community members, Nigrani Committee of adolescent girls and VEC members. All the programmes have bottoms-up decision making approach on school readiness, literacy skills and women empowerment issues. The teachers are child friendly in their behaviour and evince commitment**
- **BNS appoints teachers who are trained in Montessori education for Jhula Ghar and Indore ECCE centres. For ICDS it is contained in the scheme that teachers have to undergo three months induction course with focus on package of services contained ICDS scheme. The teacher-training faculty of BNS organises long term and short-term training for teachers, ECCE teachers and Anganwadi Workers and conduct orientation of teachers at monthly meetings where they work as professionals. In this way, there exists a continuous interaction for teacher development of skills and attitudes evolving mature views on child development issues.**

- There are need-based special sessions arranged for the development of experiences in art, music, health and hygiene for teachers from time-to-time. Experts from national agencies are invited to deliver lectures supported by demonstration
- Teacher pupil ratio has been kept below 1:30.
- The ECCE teacher has a multiple role to play As per schedule, she has to interact with community social groups-parents and Nigrani Committee, VEC and management representatives and professionals, therefore, **preferably resourceful teachers are selected and continually oriented towards BNS philosophy**



BODH SHIKSHA SAMITI

1. Background and Philosophy

Bodh Shiksha Samiti (BSS) started its programme of education for the vulnerable sections of urban slums as a non-profit organisation in 1987. It was an idea to bring about improvement in the life of slum dwellers of Jaipur and provide quality education to deprived children, thereby protecting the rights of the child and working out an appropriate school education system. The focus was on nurturing and developing the abilities of children of age-group 3-5 yrs. with a view to preparing them to enter the formal stream of education.

Vision of Bodh is "to evolve, consolidate and disseminate alternative approach of integrated community schools for appropriate elementary education of disadvantaged children focusing particularly those children who have no access whatsoever to mainstream education system" (Bodh Shiksha Samiti, 1998).

A group of philanthropic volunteers comprising academicians and educators came forward to evolve alternative system of elementary education for the under-privileged children and conceived the idea of joyful and cost-friendly education as a necessary experience for children coming from marginalized sections of the society. In pursuance of their efforts, they set out to study the needs and approach to quality elementary education, wherein they conceived a model educational venture in the area of early childhood education. The community they wished to serve had much apprehension because in the past they had unhappy experiences with the people who had approached them with the promise of providing education to their children. It took nearly two years to win the confidence of the community and ensure them of their sincere attention for developing a system of quality education for their children. The first Basti in which the team chose to work was **Gokulpuri, now called Telepada in Shashtri Nagar of Jaipur.** The families of disadvantaged groups, migrant labour, landless labour and traditional artisans largely inhabit the locality. Eventually, **Bodh Shala** took shape. The parents and children got together and constructed a thatched roof structure. Over the years, this thatched roof structure has been transformed into six room buildings at the foot of the Aravalli hill, with full cooperation of the local community. Bodh's efforts were acclaimed by the local community and word of

appreciation traveled in the locality eliciting over-whelming response. Eventually Bodh Shala was registered as an Organisation of Education in 1989. Financial support was sought from the MHRD under its scheme for innovative experiments for school education. Quality primary school programme in conjunction with ECCE programme is now being undertaken in 7 slums bastis of Jaipur and 17 centres of Thanagaji Block of Alwar district, Rajasthan. The plan of action is in operation and is working as cost free quality education programme for the vulnerable groups of society as a progressive step for the overall development of young children. Now, the younger siblings have started coming to school along with their older brothers and sisters.

The pre-school programme was inducted in the scheme for elementary education to provide opportunities of education for girl child. The girl child was held back at home to look after their young siblings. Further, school experience was an unfriendly experience for children who were first generation learners from poor families. Bodh philosophy emerged as a form of reform movement against school's traumatic experiences. This led to the inception of Bodh's pre-school centres in 1993, first with a pilot grant, to be later run by full-fledged project funding, from the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) (India). These were set up within the primary schools in each slum habitation, many of which were spread out according to the space available.

With the financial grant from Agha Khan Foundation (AKF), Bodh started new school centres in four other slum localities of Jaipur namely **Ramdev Nagar, Malviya Nagar, Guru Tek Bahadur Nagar and Nagtalahi**. Two more schools were opened for slum children in **Amargarh and Chittorgarh** in 1993-94, bringing the total number of schools to eight including bifurcation of one school into two units.

The programme caters to child development needs of 662 children in the age group 3-6 years. There are 8 teachers and 12 mother teachers for urban slums and 17 teachers in combination with 17 mother teachers working in rural areas. The teachers work for 8 hours a day.

In 1995, Bodh further expanded its activities by extending its innovative approaches to ten government primary schools in Jaipur on a pilot basis. These schools largely catered to children of slum and/or inner city residents, not very different from children who attend the slum

schools, in terms of socio-economic background. Termed as the **Adoption Programme of Bodh**, this is also being supported by AKF (I). Schools were chosen for the purpose, teachers recruited, and training was given to the new Bodh and government teachers working in the selected schools. The programme was visualized as moving incrementally from Class 1 to 5 in the five-year period planned for. Among other things, this required the placement of Bodh teachers in each of the ten State schools, alongside of the newly trained government teachers. In all the initiatives undertaken by Bodh, due respect has been accorded to **Bodh's fundamental principle of community and parental participation and support**.

It is a fact that most of the children from poor families are engaged at home in domestic chores, especially girls who are engaged in rearing their siblings, as a result of which there have been pit falls in terms of high dropout rates for girls, the girl-child remaining out of school and children's fear for school education. The idea of sound pre-school education during the 0-6 yrs., the critical years of childhood has been marginalized in the field of education for want of adequately trained teachers and effective TLMS, especially in the rural areas. It was the strong realization of the importance of **childhood needs-fulfillment** that impelled the small working group of Bodh thinkers to move into Jaipur slums. They held meetings with community elders to develop a concerted opinion for making a fair start towards quality basic education. Among them, Yogendraji, the Present Executive Project Director, undertook pioneering efforts to arrange for child centered Basic Education of vulnerable groups of young children. In course of time, Bodh through its programmes for quality early childhood education in conjunction with elementary education and women's upliftment made strides in the spread of necessary programmes for quality education.

The Bodh Samiti has attained stature at the national and international levels for **NGO of vision and practical experience**. The efforts of the Samiti have met with overwhelming response from world donor organisations like AKF, WHO, UNICEF and MHRD in terms of funds for action plan.

2. The Bodh Programme

The Programme of Bodh Samiti revolves around **Emotional and Social Development of children**, which is the **key pedagogical issue for the children of weaker section**. This is achieved through their specially developed materials and classroom processes that tend to ensure proper personal development of each child. In this context, Bodh Samiti has made

original contribution in the form of innovations with the abolition of text books and their replacement by **specially designed and developed graded material**, appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child. Bodh Samiti's ventures in the field of early childhood education have come forward as a movement towards progressive education for the children of the poor and deprived families.

The salient features of Bodh Samiti that emerged out of discussions during field visits are

- Evolving an **effective and efficient alternative model for Pre-School and Primary education** for the benefit of the under privileged children of the marginalized sections of the society,
- Imparting education according to needs of the children. **Self-pacing and flexibility in time** are vital elements for the child's education,
- **Learning without fear** is encouraged in all respects,
- For young children, **courtyards and the nature** are the schools. Culturally, folksongs and folklore are incorporated into teaching- learning. Teachers are trained to act as affectionate, caring and loving parents,
- Schooling encored in community participation. Community participation is the backbone of educational process. Bodh feels that "**without involvement of community, no educational process can be successful**",
- Making teaching-learning processes **sensitive to child's esteem and his/her democratic rights**,
- Developing activities to make use of inherent capabilities and potential of the child
- Interactive classroom processes,
- Mainstreaming Bodh's innovative practices for quality improvement in macro school education system.

2.1 Characteristics of Bodh ECCE Programme

- A clean, safe and healthy environment including toilet and water facilities in urban slums and in rural ECCE centres. The accommodation in residential places is offered for use by the local community who have appreciation for Bodh's effort for ECCE programme
- An appropriate adult-child ratio which is 1:30. The teachers and mother teachers work together to help children in self-help skills, cleanliness and conduct of play activities. They have assigned roles and duties and work in harmony.

- Adequately trained staff has been employed at all centres. The teachers and the mother-teachers have been imparted induction course at the in-service level. They are from the same locality and same economic class. **During interactions, it was reported that those mother-teachers who were working in rural areas and could not continue because of administrative reasons, still visited the centres occasionally.**
- A home like atmosphere of love and warmth at the ECCE centre reveals the emotional security provided to the child. At many centres, we found a few children relaxing and taking rest without any tension or stress.
- The centre has a prepared environment with special materials developed for the children to participate and interact. The consumed materials are replaced by teacher-made materials on time. There is direct reporting and prompt action by teachers in all aspects.
- Development of healthy habits and healthy living is impressed upon each child at the Bodh centres.
- Children learn more from **natural environment and through environmental material.** Use of environmental objects/material in teaching-learning process keeps the child at a concrete level for learning.
- Bodh schools have **no grades or classes.** They group children on the basis of their learning levels. Bodh has evolved its own system of grouping where the boundaries of grade and/or norms have been done away with. Chronological age is not the only basis for grouping of children. They are also grouped in accordance with their level of comprehension of particular aspects of the curriculum **Peer learning is encouraged.**
- Flexible timings are arranged according to the availability of children and their convenience. Ample scope is allowed for the socialization process to take place in each child. The mother groups and kishori groups are constantly oriented towards child development activities and family welfare practices.

The Bodh Samiti has given full recognition and academic freedom to the teacher with a belief that teachers have intrinsic qualities or sensibilities which favorably prepare them for working with young children. Their working skills are sharpened by the intensive training programme of **three months induction course** followed by one-month yearly recurrent programme in two

phases. These training inputs give them sufficient ground to understand the philosophy and vision of Bodh which is embedded in three cardinal principles:

- ◆ **Quality**
- ◆ **Human dignity**
- ◆ **Democratic way of life.**

There is no hierarchy of administration in Bodh. Every teacher has to perform for the school-activities such as working with children, interacting with mother's group, adolescent groups and visits to their homes. The teachers have full freedom to experiment with new ideas and come out with innovative activities. Thus, the teacher is the designer, practitioner and experimenter of curriculum. It may be pointed out that **Bodh makes a discrete selection of resourceful and dedicated teachers who are committed to the cause of providing quality education to young children and who wish to continue with the Bodh Shiksha Samiti.**

3. Organisational Structure

The core group of Bodh Samiti comprises 21 members headed by the Ms Mukulika Sen, Director with Mr. Yogrnder Upadhaya as the Executive Director. The core group consists of academicians, thinkers and practitioners. Responsibilities have been divided and delegated to the members who have a networking down to the grassroots levels. The whole structure works on democratic lines exerting freedom of opinion and collective decision. The difficulties envisaged in the implementation process are tackled jointly with tact and discretion.

Management Structure

Designation	Male	Female	Total
Board Member, Executive Director, Senior and other coordinators.	9	12	21
Teachers	83*	51	134
* Owing to ground realities in rural areas, female teachers are not easily available.			

The organisational structure of Bodh is given in the above table along with the number of teachers. There is no hierarchy of officers from bottom up to top. There is a fraternity of professionals, dedicated teachers and other workers who work with open mind, enthusiasm and consensus of opinion. They have vast experience and know - how and are loyal to the

organisation working with a missionary zeal towards the care and development of young children.

Bodh Samiti has 134 teachers in which 83 are male and 51 female as per the records of the year 2000. The male teachers are more in number because in the rural areas, female teachers are not easily available, but Bodh has taken up local women as **mother-teachers** relaxing their educational qualifications **upto class VIII**. Bodh adheres to its concern for gender equity in its organisational structures as is evident from the composition of its executive as well as other functionaries at different levels

4. Complementary Programmes

Bodh Samiti has various types of programmes running under its care and direction for the weaker sections of society since 1987, the beginning year when they set-up child friendly Basic Education School in Gokulpuri Slum Basti of Jaipur. In course of time, they expanded their programme of child centered Basic Education to other eight Bastis of Jaipur. Further, they marched ahead across the boundary to Jaipur district and opened 17 ECCE centres in Thanagaji Block of Alwar districts and 15 centres in Ajmer district. Also, they have up-scaled their programmes with the inclusion of 10 government schools for adoption process. In this manner they have devised **up-scaling strategy in partnership with the State Education Department for the improvement of Basic Education**. Thus, various programmes for quality primary education are being managed by the Bodh Samiti with the help of their core group of academicians and professionals. Various complementary groups are in operation under the auspices of Bodh organisation. The programmes have been adapted to suit the needs of target groups of children in respect of access, materials and timings. A short account is given below.

4.1 Bodhshalas

Bodhshalas are integrated community schools in which the seven elements of the education process have a unity of purpose. These seven elements are - (i) learner; (ii) teacher; (iii) curriculum; (iv) content; (v) pedagogy, (vi) process of evaluation; and (vii) environment (school and community). As per the work plan of 2003, the present strength of children in Bodhshalas is 1316, out of whom 694 are girls and 622 are boys. Three Bodhshalas out of seven in Jaipur city are scaled-up to upper primary level.

4.2 Adoption Programmes (Rajkiya Janshala)

In addition to the Bodhshalas, Bodh Samiti has adopted other activities either to demonstrate its strategies or support other programmes at the request of the Rajasthan government or other funding agencies. Some of these are also located in rural areas. These are:

4.2.1 Samudayik Janshalas (SJS)

Bodh interventions have extended to new socio-geographical areas in partnership with other organisations. These are called **Samudayik Janshalas (SJS)** run by the selected NGOs in four cities, namely, Jaipur (102), Ajmer (22), Bharatpur (32) and Jodhpur (12 planned but yet to start). Bodh Shiksha Samiti provides academic and technical support to the SJS, so that Bodh's approaches are fully adhered to in classroom transactions and other activities including regular interaction with the communities. There are 156 SJS with 187 teachers and 8219 children spread over the slums in Jaipur, Bharatpur and Ajmer where no educational facilities existed. Around 50% slums have been covered in which 60-70% out-of-school children have been enrolled by SJS. 80% coverage is expected by 2006 provided the SJS programme continues.

4.2.2 Shikshanchal (Girls' Primary Education Programme)

In 1999, the Bodh Shiksha Samiti extended their services to rural areas and started 32 Bodhshalas in partnership with CARE-India in Thanagaji block of Alwar District. Presently there are 1617 children with 71 teachers. There are 783 girls and 834 boys in these Bodhshalas. There are 17 pre-school centres with 17 mother teachers. Five centres of adolescent girls have been set up with 150 members. Programmes of skill development in local art, music and other creative activities have been initiated. Bodhshalas under Shikshanchal are popular among village communities who prefer them more than the government primary school for their children. These Bodhshalas have generated awareness in the communities about the rights of the child to education.

4.2.3 Shikshak Pahal

These are mainstream schools with Bodhshalas as models. There are eight alternative schools in Umrein Block of Alwar District with 18 teachers and 441 children including 212 girls. These alternative schools are run as Bodhshalas with full inputs of Bodh pedagogy and duly supported by Good Earth Foundation (GEF), DPEP (Rajasthan) and under Programme for Enrichment of School Level Education (PESLE) by AKF and CARE, India.

4.2.4 Working with Mainstream Schools

Bodh has been mainstreaming its innovative pedagogy for more than 6 years now, known as **Mainstream Interaction Programme (MIP)** - Implementing the adoption programme in 10 government schools of Jaipur City. This activity has now been completed and Bodh provides technical and academic support to Rajkiya Janshalas (RJs) under the Joint GOI/UN System Education Programme. Programmes of rural areas also belong to this category of extension.

5. Field Visits

Given below is a brief description of some of the bastis/centres visited by the team.

5.1. Basti Gokulpuri, Shastri Nagar, Jaipur

The Basti at Gokulpuri is situated at the foot of the rocky Hillock of Aravalli Range. Presently, 200 families are residing in the basti. The local community is heterogeneous in composition of castes comprising of. Rana, Yogi, Bali Nayak, Brahmans, Rajputs and Harijan. Their socio-cultural subgroups suffer from social evils of child marriage, gender bias and superstitions that has sapped the vitals of their socio-economic life and thus, their attention away from child care and family welfare.

Most of the people of the Gokulpuri Basti belong to low income group of 1000/- p.m. Majority of them are unskilled or semi skilled labourers. The rest comprise of employees of Rajasthan State Government and some do small business as vendor. They do not possess any inherited property of land or housing. They have to take debt from moneylenders for marriages of their children or other social rituals, which they liquidate with interest through generations. It is in these adverse circumstances that Bodh Samiti's founding members raised their voice for quality Primary Education and child literacy. The literacy rate in the last six years has increased to 90% male, 55% female which is higher than the national literacy rate of 75.8 % male and 54.2 % according to 2001 census but only a few young men are matriculate. No girl is a matriculate.

The Teacher-pupil ratio in the centre is in the range of 1.26 to 1.29 with no child of the age group 3-6 years outside Bodh Shala. According to a current survey (2002), the total population of Basti is 939 (520M and 419F). The strength of woman and adolescent girls' group operating as support groups is 40. Also, it is significant to note that the dropout rate is zero and **there are no out-of-school children**. The mainstreaming children to classes I and II is nearly 85 %.

The ECCE centre at Gokulpuri functions in a double story building. There are six rooms and a small courtyard which is used for outdoor play. Inside the rooms, there are cemented shelves along the walls for keeping the materials. The rooms are large enough to accommodate 25-30 children who sit in a circle or semi-circle, and the central space is used for organizing in-door play activities. There is a sharing of responsibilities between the teacher and the mother teacher. The mother teacher looks after arrangements of materials, cleanliness, self-help activities and comfort of children while the teacher takes care of the curricular activities. The outdoor play space is appropriately used for movement, wall paintings, drawings, socialization activities and dancing. The children are divided according to their developmental levels and are provided with sequentially developed play materials as part of the ECCE programme.

Chothu Ram, one of the senior teachers met us at Gokul Puri centre. He described the activities of Bodh Samiti for the education of children in this Basti when there was no building structure and children of the Basti showed negative attitude towards schooling. Bodh started with its programme of child friendly basic education in its temple premises under a tree and interacted with different groups of community from 7 A.M to 10 P.M in the day of Amavas and other moon lit nights. The small team of academicians of Bodh Samiti interacted with parents telling them about home based activities for children's developmental needs. They made alliance with teachers of Government schools and community elders to cooperate for collection of resources to provide child-friendly activities and joyful experiences for young children.

This short description of the centre at Gokulpuri gives a glimpse of the persistent endeavor of Bodh Samiti for the provision of better learning experiences for young learners that is free from fear and oppressive methods. Bodh's cardinal principle that permeates in the programme is the treatment suitable to a young child that emanates from love, and security. **The positive impact of BSS's Interventions can be judged from the steady increase of enrolment of children in the age group of 3-6 years over the last five years and significant number of children mainstreamed in formal schools.** There is a positive trend in the mainstreaming aspect of children. Also, there is ample provision for inclusion of special needs children at the centre who are cared for by the teachers and integrated into the mainstream, irrespective of their disability.

5.2 Basti Amagarh, Jaipur

Amagarh Basti is situated in the East of Jaipur city on the Delhi-Jaipur National Highway. Towards the North, there are stone quarries and remains of Old Fort. The stone mining activity in the past has driven labour force to form a small Basti here. In course of time, more and more people came to the Basti in search of employment. Shri Gangaram Meena, the oldest member of the community reported that the mining activity was stopped by the State Government in 1984, but the Basti has continued its expansion with migration of more people from rural areas to the Basti. The Basti is predominantly inhabited by Muslims. According to a survey conducted by Bodh, there are 437 families. 291 children out of 117 families of the Basti go to the Bodhshala for schooling. Out of a total population of 3088 in Amagarh Basti, 1641 are males and 1447 are females. Literacy rate of males is 62%, for females is 50% and combined literacy rate is 57%. Economically, the people here are well to do and some families are quite prosperous. In most of the families, the family members including children are involved in carving of precious stones, which is the main occupation of people here. Some people carry on business and about 1% people are working in foreign countries. The Basti is served by a Dispensary, Post Office and a Government Primary School.

The Bodhshala in the Basti is situated in the interior of Jaipur. It is interesting to note that the Bodhshala here is an unauthorized coverage of pavement constructed by the community. The Shala is a long covered area divided into sections comprising of levels of pre-school of age 3+, 4+, 5+, 6+ and 7+ in conjunction with primary classes I and II. The learning material is prepared by teachers in a workshop under the guidance of professionals. Learning material was found to be in sufficient quantity and pedagogically arranged from known to unknown, simple to complex. The material is accessible to children kept on boxes which are used as low height wooden racks.

Children were observed to be working with beads, stones and rubber tubes, sorting them out and separating them into groups for identification of numbers (1-10) in the age-group 3+ years. Some children were cutting out coloured papers into figures of a hut, joker, flower, etc. for pasting. The class I children were learning the use of Matras by joining alphabets. The whole learning process appeared to be a continuity of learning experiences of children who progressed according to their levels of achievement. A group of teachers at the centre were seen working together for planning of curricular activities. An important features of classroom

management was maintaining month-wise attendance charts. The chart indicated that most of the children attended school regularly. The teacher pupil ratio was found to be below 1:30.

It was heartening to note that community participation and ownership 'will' has been generated by Bodh's effort in Amagarh Muslim Basti. The community here has been convinced by a series of contact meetings with the Bodh management representatives to support progressive programme of education without any gender bias. **To sensitize the people from Muslim society for gender equity is a great step forward and needs to be mentioned as an innovative step. Bodh's interventions have been able to synchronize modern education with religious home schooling for Muslim minority community.**

5.3 *Guru Teg Bahadur Basti, Jaipur*

The slum Basti at Guru Teg Bahadur is a triangular piece of land with an area of 3 ½ Bigas. In the surrounding area, there are hills, forests and low-lying land. The people living here migrated from Pakistan at the time of partition in 1947 and about 80 families have settled here. The people are mostly from Sikh community and speak Punjabi. The population is 1030, out of which 545 are males and 485 are females. They celebrate sikh festivals and have a tradition of early child marriages. They have constructed Gurudwaras for community activities.

The main occupation of people living here is making knives, swords and other iron ware items. The ladies carry out stitching of garments and carving of precious stones. Some of the women and girls work as part time maidservants. Thus the entire community works to supplement their income which is Rs.100- 200/- per day approximately. People here do not have means to earn enough money. Whatever they earn, they spend on drinking and gambling. They subscribe to gender disparity and show preference for male child. They believe that the girl is to be married and hence parents have to save for their dowry. The literacy rates for males and females are 78% and 61 % respectively but it was found that there was hardly any girl or women having studied after matriculation.

The significant efforts of Bodh Shiksha Samiti here have been in sensitizing the community towards education of children, specially that of girls and mobilizing the community. **The decision for setting up of a centre for primary or pre-school has been taken through the process of negotiation and confidence building.** The regular contact meetings with

community members have been able to generate a sense of ownership for Bodh sponsored programme. This is manifested in the community's cooperation for the provision of free use of space at 3 residential houses. The age specific centres (3+, 4+ and 5+) could not be accommodated in a single large space because of lack of availability of a large room. Consequently, the three centres are spread out in the Basti. The learning material is stored in a room at one place and every day carried by children to their respective centres.

Now, the whole Basti has become a campus for Bodh primary and pre-school education allowing greater opportunity for child-to-child, teacher- child and teacher-parent contact. This interaction builds happy relationships and leaves pleasant experiences by being together. At the end of the day's sessions, this kind of an interaction motivates the children to wait eagerly for the next day.

5.4 Rural ECCE Centres in Block - Thanagaji, District - Alwar

Bodh Samiti has opened 17 pre-school centres in Thanagaji Block of Alwar District. The scheme is funded by CARE and AKF the donor organisations. Basic play materials specific to rural situations have been developed in workshops in collaboration with Eklavya.

The criteria for the selection of Thanagaji Block, Alwar for provision of ECCE quality education has been the low literacy rate, showing male literacy rate (21%) and female literacy rate (5%). Most of the girls in the age-group of 6-14 years remain out of school due to sibling care and domestic chores. The community members were sensitized for early childhood education. Now the girls are liberated from sibling care who come to the Bodh Shala with their older and younger brothers and sisters. The centre aims at promoting social and emotional development of young children. The child is recognized, loved and allowed freedom to satisfy his/her curiosity and exploratory instincts. The mother-teacher appointed at the centre looks after the nurturance needs of the child. The understanding and confidence among local women and adolescent girls is built in open interactive sessions held everyday with a prefixed agenda. They are free to express their opinions and experiences. Academic support is given to teachers and mother-teachers in monthly meetings/workshops. Bodh can and does appoint teachers and mother-teacher from the well-groomed group of kishoris. This procedure helps Bodh Samiti to overcome the short fall of trained teachers who move out of Bodh organisation on account of their own personal reasons.

Features of the Centre Visited

- *The programme meets the needs of disadvantaged groups of slum dwellers and remote rural areas which are difficult to reach.*
- *The programme has created awareness among parents and community elders for willing cooperation who have provided the free use of clean, safe and home like environment at the centres*
- *Flexible timings to meet the needs of local volunteer groups of adolescent girls and women for interactive sessions.*
- *Interaction on a shared basis with community members through face-to-face meetings resulting in systematic understanding of women and children welfare activities. The teacher and mother-teachers are accountable to women's collectives, mother groups and kishori groups.*
- *The girls are free from sibling care who come along with them to the centre The centre is suitably located*
- *Teachers and mother-teachers are adequately trained*
- *Role of the teacher and the mother-teacher is like that of a facilitator and care giver respectively Teachers and mother-teachers are of the same locality - bridging the gap in between home and centre and freely mixing with parents on home visits*
- *Daily planning by the team of teachers working at the centre ensures self-monitoring and continuous improvement in consultation with experts.*

6. Observations

6.1 Curriculum

The Bodh's approach towards curriculum development is based on innovative practices and experiments incorporating concerns for holistic development of the child. Every pre-school centre has a pre-planned curriculum reflecting the various activities at the centre.

The Samiti has adopted a flexible approach in curriculum design and operational strategies. The teachers are consulted in the curriculum development process. Bodh offers a convenient and workable transactional strategy for children. This is important as the children belong to lower socio-economic group and are first generation learners. Also, their parents join the work-

force at distant places as security guards and as semi-skilled labour and have odd working hours. Therefore, adjustment of timings for the functioning of centres has been made keeping in view the available time with the child.

It is desirable to plan curriculum as per the objectives for the all round growth and development of a child belonging to low socio-economic sub-groups to which the Bodh Samiti caters. It may be pointed out that Bodh Samiti has appropriately responded to the developmental needs of the target groups. There are 4 to 6 major dimensions of child development under which the activities are devised to suit the local specific needs. Here, we find modification in terms of material and role of mother-teacher in urban slums and rural hamlets. The activities in curriculum are properly organized and sequentially graded in order of complexity from level 1 (age group 3+) to level 3 (age group 5+ or 6)

To accelerate growth and development, Bodh has adopted specially designed materials and adequate classroom practices necessary for healthy habits and motor skills. To socialize the child, there are activities like story telling, dramatization, singing, dancing and collectively preparing a collage or a scrapbook of locally available objects. Structured play activities, local games, outdoor and indoor games, running, jumping, pushing, walking, skipping for large muscle co-ordination and activities like stringing of beads, flowers, leaves, stitching, tearing and pasting for fine motor co-ordination form a part of the curriculum.

Bodh has given appropriate place for **social and emotional development in the curriculum.** It is the conviction of Bodh's academic core group that children from vulnerable sections of society suffer from social and emotional problems and therefore, it is common to find **traits of aggression, timidness and disturbed concentration in their behavior.** Realizing the necessity of a balanced and healthy growth for such children, Bodh has developed a set of activities conducive to proper social and emotional development of children. Through play activities, a child is helped to inculcate habits of courtesies and motivated to play and work with others in a group. Involvement of women groups and Kishori groups in this endeavour has enhanced the scope of interaction of children and has helped to enrich the home experiences of these children.

Further, children are encouraged to learn and share ideas within the group. To promote **cognitive development**, there are situations that encourage children to express their feelings, preferably through their own dialect. The child gets ample opportunities to **narrate events or**

Incidents, tell stories and recite poems, role play in drama, tell the names of days and months, familiar objects and relationships and so on. The gap between the local dialect of the child and the language spoken at the centre is bridged by the appointment of teachers and mother-teachers generally from the same village. Whenever the teacher is not available from the same village, mother-teacher interacts with the teacher to acquaint him/her with the working vocabulary of local dialects for communication purposes.

Along with **language development**, children are provided with activities for the development of concept of numbers 1 to 10 and activities to differentiate objects of different shapes, sizes and colors and their sequential order from simple to complex. In the context of nature study and environmental study, at every centre, Bodh Samiti has provided a number of potted plants and flowers. Further, children are taken to nearby public park or a garden to observe plants, type of soil, stones, water-resources, changing position of sun and also places of worship. They also visit nearby work places to have a view of activities and different professions of the community.

For **development of creativity**, the curriculum incorporates art education in the form of drawing of pictures, making models of clay, collection of objects, tracing of shapes and coloring activities at each centre. There are display boards for children's work, chalk-boards and wall space painted black. This gives freedom to the child to have free choice of drawing of circles or lines on the wall. The displayed items are used as a part of curriculum which develops a sense of self-esteem in the child.

From the above, it is reflected that the curriculum at Bodh centres provides concrete learning experiences to children. These experiences are interesting and joyful as they satisfy the needs of children for curiosity, problem solving, self-expression, self-help and a wide range of creative work. The formulation of daily schedule of activities involves the team of teachers and mother-teachers together at the centre. This daily planning is a part of curriculum transaction and involves joint approach by teachers working at a centre. This practice of daily planning jointly by the team of teachers and mother-teachers at the centre provides feedback for introspection, revision and reinforcement.

Bodh has developed a wide range of **curricular material**. Its contents are in relevance to the different age groups and developmental status of children in the centre. The material is local specific, based on home experiences of the child. There is a lot of scope for active participation

and imaginative play. Story telling, role play, puppetry, dramatization and listening to musical folklore are important curricular interventions for socialization and language development. The material is cost-friendly and aesthetic in design and well-organized for learning.

The curriculum reflects the use of pedagogical principles of **known to unknown** and **simple to complex** for conceptual development. We find the inclusion of geometrical shapes, matching of numbers and objects, order relations, properties of 3 dimensional regular objects and laminated flash cards and picture dominos in order of complexity. There are puzzles and games to develop problem-solving skill. They have clay items for making small pottery and common objects of the surrounding. We saw children making shapes of domestic animals, houses, furniture items and kitchen utensils as a '**free choice individual activity**'. Other groups were making drawings of animals, plants, flowers, joker, house, sun and moon. The locally available material like clay, grass stems, wooden sticks, leaves woven to garlands for welcome and wood cutouts are used. For making drawing, children use wax and pencil colours supplied by Bodh. The drawings reflected circular shapes, triangular shapes and a nice blend of colours and cartoons.

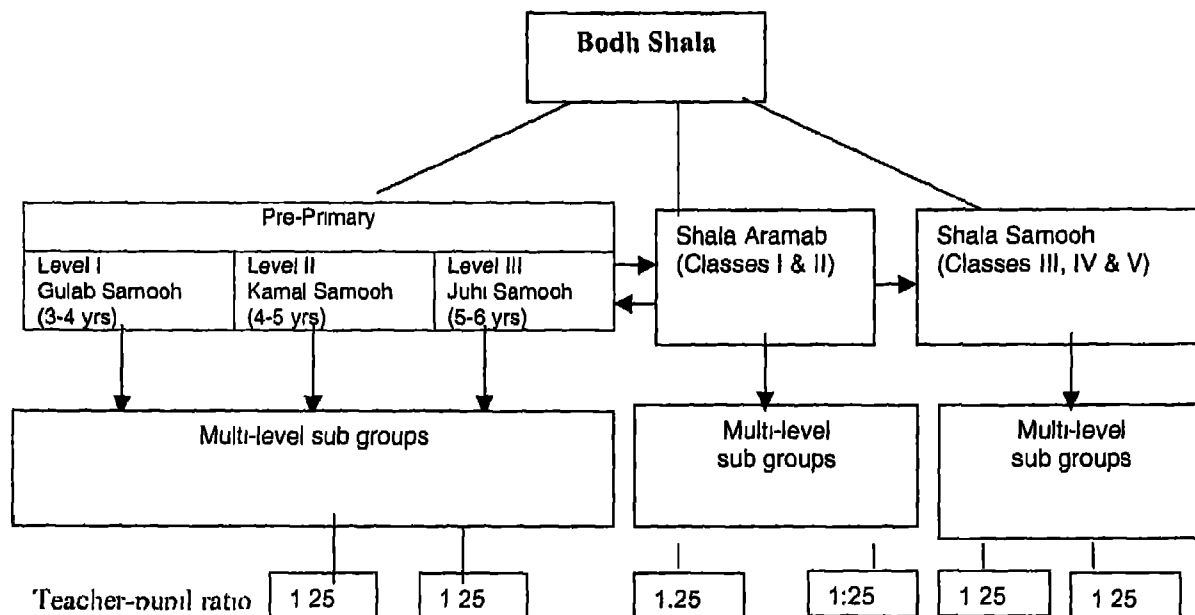
The curriculum exhibits integration of learning experiences which are related to life and immediate environment of the learner. There is plenty of scope for the development of basic skills through the process of identification, comparison, classification and sequencing through group and individual activities.

6.2 Classroom Organisation and Management

Bodh has evolved its own system of grouping of children in the classroom where the boundaries of grade norms have been done away with. Children are grouped in accordance with their level of comprehension of a particular aspect of the curriculum. The advantage of this multi level grouping strategy is that there is ample scope for child-to-child learning and socialization processes to take place having positive effect on the emotional development of children. Children move to the higher levels on the basis of their interest and performance in participative play activities. The activities have been arranged in order of complexity. Broadly speaking, the Bodh Shala curriculum is a part of continuum of learning experiences extending from early childhood to grade I of primary school. That is why the location of ECCE centre has

been planned in vicinity of Primary Schools. In this manner, it is possible to share teaching-learning material and arrange for mutual consultation.

Diagram Showing School Readiness Linkages



The Pre-Primary group is divided into 3 levels according to the age-group of the children. The first level is the age-group between 3-4 yrs which is named as **Gulab Samooh**. The second level is named as **Kamal Samooh** which includes children in the age group 4-5 yrs. The third age-group 5-6 years is named as **Juhi Samooh**. The different groups are given different activities according to their developmental status and these activities are interlinked. The "**Shala Aaramb**" group basically includes children of the lower primary level (equivalent to grade I and II), while the "**Shala Samooh**" group includes children of Classes III, IV and V. It has been reflected that 90% of children from the **Juhi Samooh** of **Bodh Shala (ECCE Centre)** have joined class I of "**Shala Aaramb**".

The centre's accommodation is provided by the community which serves as a bond between the community and **Bodh Samiti**. The children's work like drawing, paper cuttings, construction of soft clay models are displayed on the walls and shelves and is replaced regularly with fresh items for providing motivation, novelty and variety to sustain interest of young children. The TLM like flashcards, play materials, play kits, worksheets, picture cards, plastic toys and puzzles, etc are placed in containers in the classrooms. There are shelves in the walls for

placing learning materials. The children have individual mats of small size so that their seating arrangement is adjustable according to the needs of the activities to be conducted and to allow freedom to select and participate in activities.

In each room of the centre, there is a learning corner for children. The children organize and play in the learning corners under the guidance of their teacher. They are also encouraged to collect and bring materials for learning corners in the form of picture books, story books, leaves, clay models, nests, eggs and other waste materials.

6.2.1 _ Organising the activities

The activities devised in a Pre-Primary Bodh Centre provides for a well-balanced, overall development of all children in the classroom. The selection of specific activities is pre-planned by the teachers and shared with the members of core group team. Following categories of activities have been adopted:

- **Teacher-Directed vs. Child-Initiated.** the children must learn to do some things as instructed by the teacher (**teacher-directed**) and must also have opportunities to make and initiate their own choice of activities (**child-initiated**).
- **Individual vs. Group:** there is a need to work alone (**individual**) and a need to participate and cooperate as part of a group (**group**).
- **Set vs. Open:** some activities provide stimulus for mastering specific skills and following rules and must be done in a precise manner (**set**) while others provide for individual expression, freedom and discovery (**open**).
- **Physically active vs. physically quiet:** there must be times to stretch large muscles and make noise (**physically active**) and at other times for calm, concentrated attention (**physically quite**)
- **Development of body vs. development of mind:** the child is a whole person and must be cared for as a whole person, i.e., holistic development. This includes activities for both, i.e., development of body and development of mind

One of the promises of Bodh Pre-School Programme is the search for such activities which can contribute to as many facets of development of the child as possible, so that all may mutually reinforce each other, integrate knowledge and experience, and thereby strengthen all capacities of a child. If a child is unwilling to join a particular activity, like clay work, he/she is almost

certain to find another activities which he/she does like and which will enable him/her to develop similar skills as working with clay even if not as directly or as thoroughly. Therefore, there are alternate set of activities which may be with sand to sieve or dough making models, etc.

Also, Bodh teachers are convinced that it is the right of a child to have freedom of choice of play and materials. The teachers expressed that if a child showed resistance against a particular play, they encouraged them to proceed with an alternative play of their choice, without imposing any restrictions. Sometimes a child working in group activities chooses to play alone with some other materials and after continuing with it for sometime rejoins the group activities again. The teachers adjust the daily schedule according to the needs of each child. The child initiated and the teacher directed activities are planned in proper balance.

6.3 Children's Assessment

Bodh has adopted a comprehensive continuous evaluation procedure for children's assessment. There is **daily assessment of children's work with structured observation** by teachers. There are two worksheets for each child - one for the records and the other which the child takes home for parents' review. Bodh philosophy does not subscribe to the view that the teacher is like a doctor, who is to diagnose the ailments (or misbehaviour) of children. **They are of the view that the child has a great potential to grow and develop in a stimulating environment.** It is his/her right to be provided with enriching experiences in a conducive environment, adequately designed for his/her growth.

There are no formal tests and no grades are awarded in Bodh Shalas. The teachers follow a multi-level approach where children are grouped according to their developmental levels and performance. In addition to the daily assessment which is recorded in the teacher's diary in the form of a rating scale, weekly evaluations are also undertaken by a team of workers at the centre. The teachers continuously monitor the progress of the child through different activities in which the child participates and records their progress in their diaries which are then discussed by the core group members periodically. The system of assessment and evaluation is integrated into the daily schedule planned in advance and followed accordingly. There is no external mechanism constituted for the purpose.

The goal of ECCE is the development of the '**whole child**' having dimensions of physical, cognitive, emotional, social and moral development and creativity. A good ECCE programme

should be able to help the child to attain optimum development in all these dimensions. The child must be able to grow intellectually and emotionally. The play activities must strengthen his/her physical and social skills and promote creativity. There are behavioural indicators of the child for assessment. The teachers and the coordinators are oriented through training programmes, monthly meetings and study circle activities towards professional perception of behaviour pointers for progress of the child. In this process, the views of the parents and mother-teachers are considered significant since they are the caretakers of their children **Bodh methods of evaluation involve systematic participant observation, environmental stimulation and interviews with caregivers. The conclusions are made on the basis of rational opinion of caregivers and experience of teachers.** On talking to the teachers at the Guru Teg Bahadur Bodh Shala, Samdeya Gupta, a teacher reports her views about assessment. The following specific features of a play activity are taken in to account for assessment

- The degree of concentration shown by the child upon the activity engaged in.
- Complexity of elements in a play.
- The degree of social participation inherent in the activity.
- The degree of symbolism in the child's play.
- The language content of the play.

It was revealed that in general, play involving sustained attention is viewed as superior. The sequence of elements should form a coherent unit and play of high imagination is also considered high quality play. It is assumed that high quality play is related to social context and symbolism.

6.4 Teacher Training

In Indian culture, the teacher is addressed as 'Guru'. He/she has a place of honour and trust. It has been rightly felt that there is no substitute for a teacher who inspires, leads and **accelerates the process of learning in children**. It is well-known that teaching is a challenging task which demands professional knowledge and skills and requires constant upgradation of pedagogical ideas and practices. There is diversity of qualification norms for employment of pre-school teachers in the country. In many cases we find un-trained teachers working at pre-primary centres. At other places, there are Montessori trained/ECE trained

teachers handling young learners for child development activities. **Bodh Samiti subscribes to the theory of initiation of its teachers into its own philosophy of education (the cardinal principles of which are relevance, equity, absence of fear and freedom to the child) and child development practices.** Their Induction course includes components of child development processes, health and nutrition of child and community awareness and participation for child welfare programmes.

No quality education is possible unless teachers' knowledge is updated from time to time. The teacher is a stage setter and facilitator for organizing child friendly activities. Apart from the academic and professional qualifications, the teachers' personal traits are very important for the effective functioning of the Bodh Shala. Bodh has prescribed B A degree as minimum qualification for ECCE teacher and there is no qualification bar for mother-teachers. Bodh Samiti does not prefer to employ trained teachers because it believes in initiating the recruited teacher into its own philosophy of education. Bodh is of the view that it is easier to change the mind set of teachers towards progressive education and a teacher with an open mind is more receptive to new ideas of pedagogy as advocated by Bodh without any unlearning of their earlier training.

In the classrooms, the teachers initiate the activities either to the whole group or in smaller groups or with an individual child. They are sensitive to the child's needs and ready to help the child accordingly. They work ceaselessly with dedication and without any sign of tension. They have developed personal rapport with the children, their parents and other local social groups. They exhibit emotional stability and sense of humour. The words of encouragement spoken by teachers in the class to encourage children are worth mentioning - ***Arel aapne to kamal kiya? Kya khoob hai?***

In this context, it may not be out of place to mention that the teachers are constantly orientated in conferences held for teacher development. Interactive methods are followed in an enriching environment. **It was heartening to see teachers who have contributed with their continuous efforts and perseverance to progressive and child friendly education at the Bodh centres.**

Bodh Samiti is of the view that there is need for newly recruited teachers to look back and introspect into their childhood experiences and assess the relevance of their learning experiences in modern times. There are brain-storming sessions arranged for newly recruited

teachers regarding child friendly activities and child development work. Play is the main tool or medium of early childhood education. **The need for proper socio-emotional development of the child necessitates healthy and stimulating environment, which is emphasized at Bodh, particularly for children coming from disadvantaged sections of the community.** The personal qualities of a caring teacher for young child and child friendly approaches adopted by her/him have positive impact on child growth. In this context, the core team of Bodh Samiti has developed **sets of materials replacing the text books.**

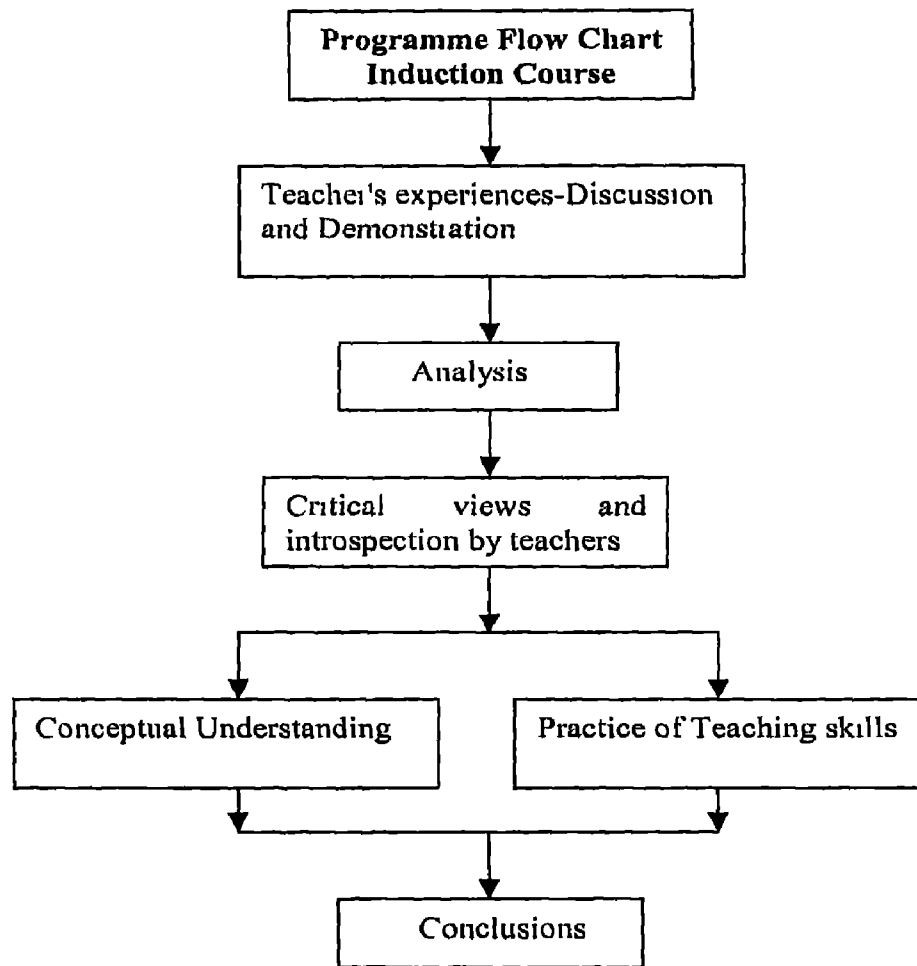
6.4.1 Types of Training

6.4.1.1 Induction Training

According to Bodh philosophy, teacher training is the backbone of any successful educational programme. Therefore, Bodh Samiti felt it necessary to ensure that all new teachers are indoctrinated to their philosophy through a training cycle that is sequential, i.e., the induction course for three months for freshers followed by yearly one month teacher development course and training workshop of 7 days for development of TLM. There is a pre-service training course of 21 days duration for mother-teachers followed by 6 days refresher course periodically. In the following table, types of ECCE training programmes have been given followed by special workshops for art, music and scientific activities carried out with low cost material

Type of Teacher Training

S.No.	Training Schemes	Minimum Qualification	Duration
1.	Pre-Service Training for Teachers (Induction course)	10 th Passed	3 Months
2	Pre-Service Training for Mother-Teacher	No qualification	21 Days
3	In-Service yearly Training	In-Service Staff	One month
4.	Special workshops for material development, visioning and pedagogical renewal in art, creativity and Health Education	do	7 days (Need-based)



The Induction course content includes-

- Teaching of institutional theory
- Theory of Pre-School play activities
- Health and children
- Child psychology
- Modern teaching methods
- Practice of the methods
- Reinforcement teachings
- Handicrafts and material development

6.4.1.2 In- Service Training

There is an yearly one-month teacher development programme and training workshop of 7 days for development of TLM. The course is need based and is for professional development of teachers. It includes discussion on pedagogical issues and decisions for implementation. Workshop sessions are planned for content and teaching techniques in the area of child development, activities related to art, music, singing, and dancing. Sometimes external experts are invited to guide teachers. These workshops are held during vacations. All the training programmes are residential and cost free for in-house teachers.

6.4.2 Teacher Recruitment and Incentives

Bodh is free to select its teachers. The minimum qualification for teachers is graduation and for Mother-teacher there is no qualification bar. Bodh Samiti prefer teachers from the local community and Bastis and candidates are selected in consultation with the local community elders. Bodh prefers female teachers for Bodhshalas but due to non-availability of educated lady-teachers in rural areas, they appoint male teachers also. Mother-teachers are from the same locality where the centre is located. The teacher is paid 3000/- per month whereas the Mother-teacher is paid 700/- per month. Annual enhancement of 10% of pay is allowed subject to appraisal of their performance. The professional growth from **beginner teacher-to-teacher innovator** can be traced as follows.

Beginner Teacher → coordinator → senior coordinator (or teacher innovator)

The teachers are associated with curriculum development, material development, formulation of annual plan and classroom action research issues. During field visits, it was reported that the mother teachers are changed periodically in rural centres or discharged of their duties due to various reasons. But out of love and affection, the ex-mother teachers come to the centres for occasional visits. They are also invited on festival days at the centre for being honored and awarded with gifts.

Teacher preparation is the heart of the programme for Bodh Samiti. They don't support the policy of recruiting trained teachers. The teachers share ideas and exchange experiences, also introspect on their own role and experience as a child in school. **They have to unlearn many conventional ideas and relearn practical classrooms strategies for organizing the activities for pre-school children.** The Induction course is supported by teacher

developmental workshops session divided into two spells. Further there are one or two need based special workshops organized for in-house teachers in specific areas. There is a team of professionals with Bodh exclusively dedicated to specific services for management and guidance of school activities. At the centres of the catchment area, there is a team of teachers and mother teachers working in partnership to deliver the child development services. The programme for teacher upgradation or development is affordable and self-sustaining. Most of the teachers in the training sessions reflect cooperation, open-mindedness and honesty.

6.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation is a critical issue in elementary school education. Bodh lays emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of Bodhshala programmes by the local community comprising mothers' groups, Kishori groups and their own team of professionals. Their strategies of contact with the childcare groups are not independent of each other. There is good amount of integration through interlinking programmes. There are formal and informal visits to Bodhshalas by coordinators, parents and village elders. This collaboration has resulted in **Home-School Partnerships** and mutual consultation between the parents and the school through a collaborative supervision mechanism.

Bodh has evolved a system of mothers' groups and Kishori groups attending the school regularly from 2-3 p.m. every day. There are well planned activities of informal consultations and discussions on child development issues such as health, literacy and nutrition facilities between the teacher and the community, bringing them closer for achieving the common goal of working towards child development activities.

Additionally, the monitoring programme is executed through local social groups comprising of youths and community members. At the same time, heads of the families realize the importance of child development activities. The opinions and discussions of parents and social groups at the meetings contribute to the success of the programme. Home visits constitute an important component of monitoring of children's progress and life at home. All these programmes are informal and internal. There is no pressure or coercion of any sort. The face-to-face interactions through well-planned and sharply focused conferences allow great scope for exchange of views. The meetings are supplemented by short term consultancy and advice on pedagogical and content issues of education for young learners.

6.6 Community Mobilization

Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for the Universalization of Elementary Education for the age-group 6-14years, involvement of community in the management of education has been strongly recommended. Further, with the Panchayati Raj system of administration coming into operation, community participation has become imperative. Community participation encompasses **contributing and sharing of resources and skills to be gained on both sides, the community on the one hand and the school system on the other.**

The important feature of Bodhshala programmes for early childhood and elementary education is the building of bonds and bridges with the local community. Bodh Samiti has realized that community participation is a significant factor leading to effective and efficient running of these Bodhshalas. The most distinctive feature of Bodh Samiti is that its organisation has brought various childcare groups under its auspices to work for achievement of a common target which is provision of child friendly education to deprived sections of the society.

As mentioned earlier on, the team during field visits observed positive and strong linkages between the Bodhshala Programmes and the community. The setting up of Bodhshalas in different areas has been possible because of the active involvement of community and pooling of their resources. The BSS has been largely successful in mobilizing the community in their endeavour to provide good ECCE programme to their children.

7. Pattern of Finance

Not enough information was available to make an accurate determination of cost. In this context, the benefits of the clientele can only be known indirectly in terms of more efficient job skills and production gains. No such survey has been done so far. It is stated that there is a linear and non-reversible relationship between quality and cost. High quality usually involves high cost but converse need not be true. Also, low cost is usually low quality but low quality need not always be low cost. These relationships are important to the study of cost effectiveness. Therefore from the dispersal of package of services, it can be estimated that the cost of ECCE component of the total plan of Bodh organisation for their interventions towards improvement of basic education in the catchment area is quite satisfactory. Excluding the cost of the salaries of the core team which is the technical resource group and land acquisition, we

find teachers and mother-teachers working for Bodh Samiti are paid a comfortable salary. They are all locals and their job is non-transferable. The compensation for their demanding working hours is their thinking that they are working for their own local community, which is recognized by community elders and Bodh Activist Groups. It is also true that Bodh has been able to receive funds from various agencies like CARE, AKF (Delhi), UNICEF, Department for Women and Child Development, MHRD and State Social Welfare Department. It is on the basis of their schemes for the improvement of quality primary education for disadvantaged children that the donor organisations have released grants. However, pattern of monthly expenditure for ECCE centre is given here as under:

1. Salary of teacher - for regular/for adhoc	Rs 3000/2000
2. Salary of mother-teacher	Rs 700/-
3. Cost of material	Rs 50/-
4. Shared workshop expenses and honoraria to experts	Rs 100/-
5. Contingencies	Rs 50/-
Total	Rs 3900/-
Maximum No. of children at the centre	= 30
Average cost utilization per month	= Rs.130

Therefore, recurring cost per child is Rs.130/- which is reasonably satisfying the basic recurrent requirements at the centre.

8. SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF BSS

- Bodh Samiti has launched programmes for quality Basic Education and child development in the Jaipur slums and rural areas of Alwar and Ajmer districts. The network of operational centres has evolved as a result of community mobilization and Bodh's pedagogical interventions. Bodh's ventureful programme has taken shape in the area where the people are traditional, economically weak and socially backward. Centres are located in covered spaces offered by the community free of cost.
- Bodh has insight into the social and emotional needs of depressed sections of society, ridden with internal conflicts and discord. It has understood the pressure of curriculum load on the young child's mind under adverse conditions. The first thing done by Bodh Samiti has been to set up Bodhshalas in the unreached areas. Bodh has provided alternative models of quality primary education with a difference. **The textbooks have been replaced**

by **graded play material and joyful learning experiences**. In the curriculum, enough scope has been given to socializing activities, emotional release, interaction processes and health programmes. Bodh has been able to meet challenges of skeptic views of a socially backward society.

- Awareness programmes for community elders and mothers have effectively been conducted through planned meetings and informal interactions. Mothers' role in the education of the young is very critical. The women of these Bastis and rural pockets are generally illiterate who lack confidence and freedom because of traditional family setup. **The role of mother-teacher is vital**. She is from the same locality and provides support to the children at the centre in terms of cleanliness, self help activities, care and use of materials.
- Bodh has organized **women's collectives** in the form of **Mahila Group** and **Kishori Group**. Both the groups attend the centre regularly in the afternoon for introspection interaction and discussion. The agenda is prefixed and during the sessions, women express their experiences and opinion on the issues related to child development and family welfare. In this way, the whole group of volunteer women sort out their domestic problems, share their views and are guided towards finding solutions. The daily home visits made by groups of teachers and mother-teachers and talking to parents about the progress of their child with mutual consultations are a part of self-appraisal and monitoring programmes done by teachers.
- Bodhshalas have a clean and healthy prepared environment, with adequate and clean **water facilities**.
- The centre is provided with a teacher and '**mother-teacher**' who creates an atmosphere of love and security for the child. The location is suitable and timings are flexible. Total working hours are 3-4 hours. Teacher Pupil Ratio is controlled at 1:30. Specially developed materials are supplied by Bodh Samiti. The materials are developed in workshops by the teacher under the guidance of professionals. Occasionally, outside expert are invited to provide technical resource support.



BALSHALA

1. Background

The third case study conducted in accordance with the sampled organisations is the **Balshala** under DPEP, Lucknow. Balshala scheme caters to the child development activities for the age-group 3-6 years along with their older siblings upto 9 years and 11 years respectively. The target groups are mostly from rural areas. One category of Balshala caters to the age-group 3-6 years and the other category caters to the needs of 3-6-11 years as per field observation.

The idea behind such an arrangement provided for two age groups under the same roof is that the problem of child care responsibilities faced by the girl child has been solved to a great extent. Further, primary education for the girl child has been arranged along with early child care and development service at the same place. Thus, the Balshala targets the pre-schoolers along with their older siblings upto 11 years. The 3-6 year olds are imparted school readiness package and the older group of children receives primary education. According to the DPEP Annual Report 2000-2001 (U.P), there are 163 centres run mainly in rural areas.

Two districts of U.P., namely, **Hardoi and Shahjehanpur** were selected for the study for field visits. The districts of Hardoi and Shahjehanpur were selected on the basis of **similar demographic** variables and their centrally located position in the State of U.P. The ECCE services are also provided through ICDS centres in accordance with ICDS scheme sponsored by the Department of Women and Child Development. The two types of centres are run by the project staff working in Alternative Schooling (AS) wing under the aegis of State Project Director (SPD). Consequently, there is convergence at the grass root level effected under the direction of **unified structure** at the Head Office. It was also reported that the strategy of strengthening of Madrasahs is designed to benefit muslim girls who comprise a large portion of out-of-school children. The timings of Balshalas are synchronized with that of the primary school so as to enable the girl child to remain in school for scheduled hours. Bi-monthly meetings are held to review the programme implementation for education of girl child and ECCE interventions at state project office with the co-ordinators.

DPEP was launched as part of National Programme of Action by the Central Government in 1994 to reaffirm the National commitment to UEE. Under this plan of action, it is intended to provide free and compulsory quality education up to the age of 11 years. It may be stated that DPEP programmes are contextual and local specific that has entailed area planning and decentralized management with **district as unit of planning**. DPEP programmes have accelerated alternative schooling, teacher development, TLM development, community mobilization and ECCE services. DPEP in U.P., with its continuous thrust on improvement of quality of primary and pre-primary education, has progressed well. After achieving the targets of access and retention in primary education, presently there is a focus on improvement of quality of primary education.

Overall primary school enrolment in Basic Education Project (BEP) districts in the period 1991-92 to 1997-98 has increased to 32% as compared to 22% in non-BEP districts as per the data available. The enrolment of girls in BEP districts in lower and upper primary classes has been significantly larger than the pre project years.

The perspective plans for interventions prepared are based on the issues related to gender equity and quality Basic Education for disadvantaged groups at the village *Nyaya Panchayat* and district levels. The programme of action has been developed in meetings with Village Education Committee (VEC) headed by **Sarpanch**. Not only were the functionaries of education department involved in this process of participatory planning and development at the district level but also the elected representatives were also active partners. Through this process, it was possible to develop a strong sense of ownership of plans which are realistic and implementable by the district and sub-district level functionaries.

DPEP recognizes community participation as key component for the success of the programme to achieve universal primary education. Therefore, the programme has envisaged close interaction with the local community groups, VECs, PTAs, MTAs through participatory processes in planning and management of primary education. The local NGOs have been identified and adopted for improvement and support system. The programme interventions have been sustainably carried on to this year which is the closing year of DPEP project and the beginning of SSA programme for its extended role for higher target groups.

2. Philosophy of DPEP

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) is one of the largest programmes of its kind in India. DPEP-II in Uttar Pradesh was launched in September 1997. Its main goal has been the improvement of primary education in respect of access, retention, girls' education and completion of primary education by most of the children and consequent improvement in achievement levels. Specifically, DPEP aims to develop and implement in the project districts replicable, sustainable and cost effective programmes for the improvement of primary education. Its broad goals are to

- reduce differences in enrolment, dropout and learning achievement among gender and social groups to less than 5%,
- reduce overall primary dropout rate for all students to less than 10%,
- raise average achievement level by at least 25% over measured baseline assessment level and ensure achievement of basic literacy and numeracy competencies and a minimum of 40% achievement level in other competencies by all primary school children,
- provide access for all children to primary education (classes I-V) through primary schooling wherever possible or its equivalent non-formal education,
- strengthen the capacity of national, State and district level institutions and organisations for planning, management and evaluation of primary education.

The objectives of U.P., DPEP were further classified into the following components:

(i) **Improving access.** promoting community school construction programme, improving non-formal primary education;

(ii) **Improving quality and completion:** strengthening community participation, improving readiness to learn, improving staff and teacher's performance and school management, curriculum and textbooks, strengthening programmes for women education, rehabilitating dilapidated school buildings, supporting pilot projects and innovations; and

(iii) **Building institutional capacity:** Improving planning, management and professional support structures, improving information for planning, management and professional support.

At the time of the project preparation in 1992-93 the educational situation in the project districts was among the worst in India. The gross enrolment ratio at that stage was only 63.3% for primary grades. Survey suggested that less than 40% of the girls entering school completed the first five years of schooling. The baseline achievement test in 3 districts showed that about half of the students in grade V had not mastered grade II competencies. Education for women's equality is the vital component of the overall strategy for securing equality and social justice in education. The Government of U.P. was aware that a change was needed for improvement of overall management of education system. They got in to action and capitalized on the funding by World Bank for the improvement of primary education in U.P. The World Bank lending agency recognized the link between improvement of education and poverty. They supported the project objectives and released the installment of funds on the basis of action plan and completion of official requirement by GOI (Govt. of India). One of the resolves has been the improvement of girls' enrolment so as to bridge the gender gap. Also related to the increment of girls' enrolment is the goal of reducing the differences in achievement between boys and girls in class I. Having realized the significance of gender equity in education, it was felt necessary to free the girls from the sibling care responsibility through planned process. In this regard, ***a programme of action was formulated to have a fair start for 1000 early childhood care and education centres attached to primary school on a pilot basis. To avoid duplication, these were started in non-ICDS blocks. As ECCE is provided primarily through the ICDS, the project interventions with the start of Balshalas (ECCE centres) are essentially in convergence with ICDS.***

In the context of Uttar Pradesh, ECE has been perceived of as a means of preparing children for primary education and also as a fillip to girls' education. Under the Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project (UPBEP), a conscious decision was taken to locate the ECCE centres (also known as *Shishu Shiksha Kendras*) in the school premises, so that stronger links can be established between the ECCE centres and the schools. This was deemed important as the ECCE centre is like a feeder centre for the primary school. Thus, both levels working in synergy would not only encourage higher rates of entry of children into the primary school, but also enable more girls to join and remain in primary schools.

3. Management Structure

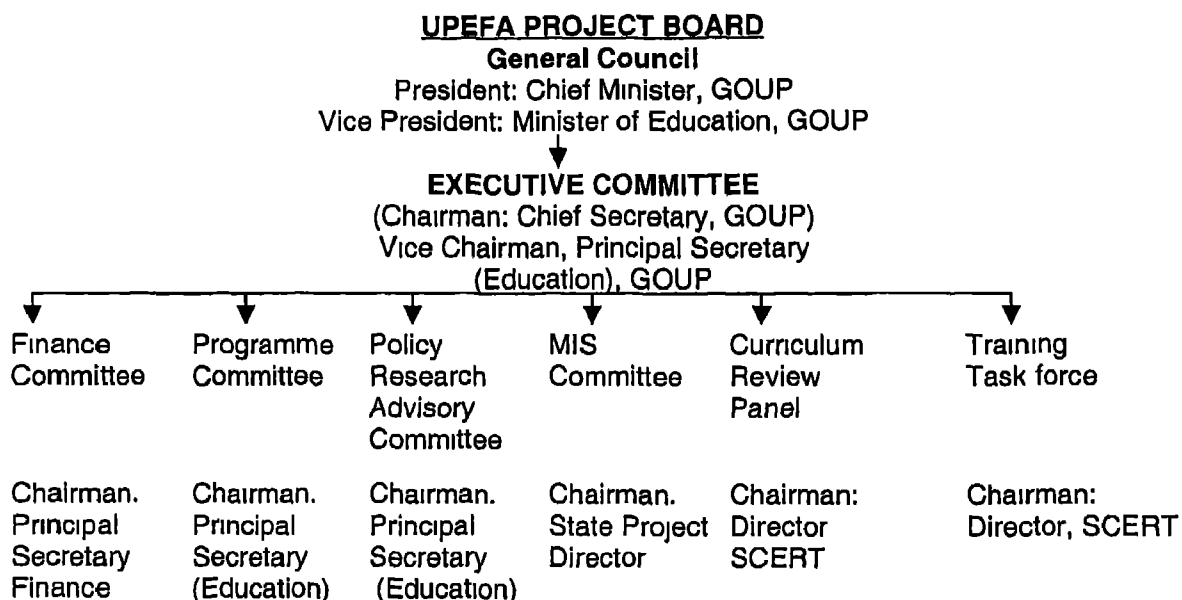
The District primary education programme intends to achieve the goal of universal primary education by creating a sustainable and decentralized educational management system and bringing in community participation in all processes of the programme. As a response to this enormous task, UP DPEP has evolved its management structure with a high degree of flexibility in administrative functioning, with mechanisms to establish accountability, provide for smooth flow of financial inputs and above all create a space to experiment with innovative methods and models. In U.P. with regional variations, the emphasis has been on contextuality, local needs and decentralized planning and the DPEP programme provides the administrative/managerial flexibility to accommodate local needs.

3.1 U.P. EDUCATION FOR ALL PROJECT BOARD (UP EFAPB)

The U.P. Education For All Project Board (UP EFAPB) was established on May 17, 1993 under the Societies Registration Act to function as a societal mission for achieving the objective of universalization of primary education. The Board has been established as an autonomous and independent body, to bring about fundamental change in the basic education system and thereby in the socio cultural scenario of UP. The Project Board has been established to oversee, guide and coordinate overall project implementation processes, allocate funds to approved programmes, maintain project accounts, coordinate procurement and monitor implementation progress.

The EFAPB has a General Council whose President is the Chief Minister and Vice President is the Minister of Basic Education, UP. The Council has about 90 members, comprising of representatives of the Government of India, senior U.P. Government officials, State and District education officials, distinguished educationists and representatives of voluntary organisations. The State Project Director is the Member Secretary. The council is the apex authority of the Project and provides overall policy guidelines and direction for implementation of the project activities.

The Executive committee of the EFAPB comprises of 27 members representing the Government of India, Government of U.P., senior State and District education officials and representatives of voluntary organisations. Its Chairman is the Chief Secretary, U.P. The State Project Director is the Member-Secretary.



The Executive Committee administers the day-to-day affairs of the EFAPB. The Committee meets twice in a year. The Executive Committee has all administrative, financial and executive authority to achieve the objectives of the Project including the power to create posts and make appointments.

3.1.1 State Project Office (SPO)

The State Project Office set-up under the UPEFAPB for implementation of the BEP meets the requirements of DPEP-II as well. The State Project Officer (SPO) is responsible for the day-to-day management, administration, implementation and monitoring of the project. The SPO also provides necessary administrative and academic support to the districts in implementation of project activities as well as monitors and supervises the progress to ensure time bound implementation, mid course corrections and maintenance of quality control. The State Project Director is in-charge of DPEP-II. The SPO is assisted by a team of Senior Professionals and Professionals who have been appointed after a careful selection process either on deputation or on the basis of contract.

3.1.2 DISTRICT EDUCATION PROJECT COMMITTEE

A District Education Project Committee (DEPC) has been constituted in all districts under the Chairmanship of the District Magistrate for overall guidance and supervision of DPEP implementation. The Chief Development Officer is the Vice-Chairman of the committee, which includes people's representatives, NGOs and women social workers, Principal DIET,

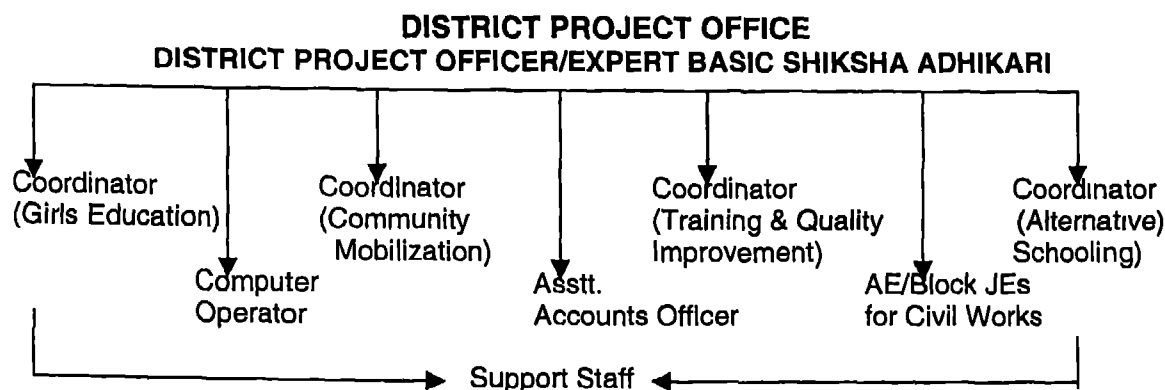
representatives of local bodies such as Zila Panchayat, Nagar Panchayat, etc. All the district level officers are its members. The functions of the DPEC include the following.

- To oversee the implementation of different components of DPEP.
- To arrange for supervision of civil works.
- To develop district Management Information System (MIS).
- To establish coordination between different departments for convergence services for primary education at the village level.
- To establish coordination between DIET and Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA)
- To issue policy guidelines for different activities under DPEP components.
- To promote structures and mechanisms for participatory educational planning and development with focus on VECs.

The District Education Officer is the member - secretary of the committee. All DPEP districts regularly convene a meeting of the DEPC every month for effective implementation and monitoring of programme interventions.

3.1.3 DISTRICT PROJECT OFFICE (DPO)

The day-to-day implementation of programme activities is managed by the District Project Office. The DPO is responsible for coordination of project implementation at the district level and preparation of district Annual Work Plan and Budget. The DPO functions under the direct supervision of the DM/CDO. The District Basic Education Officer (BSA) is responsible for all activities in the sphere of basic education. He is designated as Expert BSA for purpose of DPEP implementation and is the District Project Coordinator. The Expert BSA is supported by Deputy BSA, a civil works expert, an Assistant Accounts Officer, computer operator, accountant and supporting staff.



4. Broad Approach to ECCE in DPEP

The strategy of establishing ECCE centres serves the dual purposes of -

- freeing girls from sibling care responsibilities to enable them to attend school regularly,
- facilitating school readiness among pre-school age children

The strategy for ECCE in DPEP II in Uttar Pradesh has been to work in a convergent mode with ICDS. On the part of the project, the commitment is to provide training inputs and material support to strengthen the ECE component of the ICDS centres. The convergence approach has eliminated the possibility of duplication of services, and at the same time, is a cost effective means of augmenting outreach.

The main features of the ECCE initiative have been to

- synchronize timing of the Shishu Shiksha Kendra (SSK) with that of the primary school, so that these centres run for an additional two hours to free older siblings, particularly girls of child care responsibilities and enable them to remain in school,
- relocate the selected ICDS centres in the proximity of the primary school,
- encourage the practice of play-way method to provide children an appropriate environment for development.

The project provides the following as additionally to an existing ICDS centre that is selected for coverage under DPEP's ECCE programme:

- Training on pre-school education to the Anganwadi Worker, ICDS functionaries (Child Development Project Officers - CDPO - and Supervisors), Block Resource Centre (BRC) Co-ordinators and *Nyaya Panchayat* Resource Centre (NPRC) Co-ordinators,
- Honorarium to the Anganwadi Worker and Helper to compensate for the extra hours of work necessitated by extended timings of the centres,
- Non-recurring allocation of Rs.5000.00 to the centres at the time of initiation to procure equipments, toys, game and teaching material that encourage the play way method,
- Rs.1500.00 as annual recurring grant is provided to each centre to replenish and procure additional material.

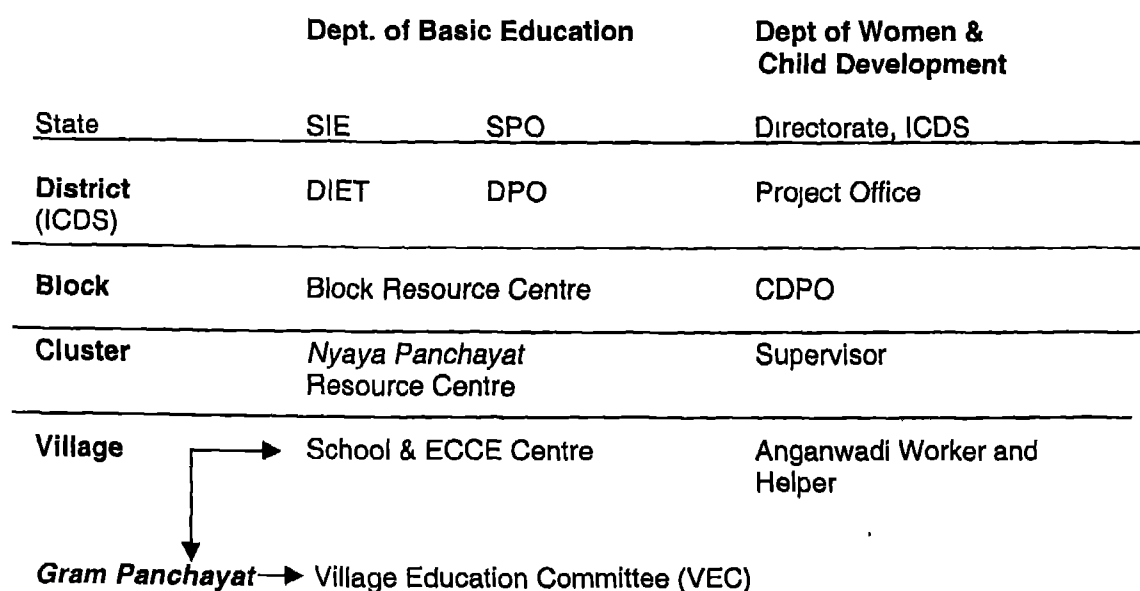
Besides the material and human development inputs, the programme also provides inputs to streamline the management aspect of the ECCE programme, with emphasis on greater community involvement. Two of the most important inputs in this respect have been to

1. strengthen the monitoring and supervision aspect of the pre-school component of ICDS. Systems have been sought to be put in place for this and also to develop capacity among the concerned ICDS and programme functionaries,
2. elicit an active role of the Village Education Committee (VEC) and the head teachers primarily through capacity building and delegation of financial and management responsibilities

Thus, convergence with the Department of Women and Child Development of the State Government has been effectuated with the understanding that the areas of convergence would be

- strengthening of ICDS centres through training and provision of material,
- agreeing on co-terminus, extended timings of the ICDS centres,
- provision of additional honorarium to the Anganwadi Worker (AWW) and Helper.

The operational details of the convergence between the department of Basic Education and Women and Child Development from the State level to the village level has been explained in the diagram below:



The different players at different levels involved in the process of implementation, which includes supervision and monitoring is clear from the diagram. Wider linkages in the planning and management of the ECCE interventions have been ensured at all levels in different ways. District level resource group has members from the education, health and women's development sectors, besides representatives from ICDS, Mahila Samakhya, NGOs and UNICEF. A similar multisectoral district level coordination committee has been operationalised comprising the Expert Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA), District Programme Officer, ICDS, CDPO, NPRCC and District Co-ordinators for Girls' Education. This committee is responsible for

- the identification of ICDS centres to be adopted as ECCE centre,
- training of the Anganwadi Workers,
- ensuring timely supply of material and honorarium,
- supervision and monitoring.

This kind of operational linkages is carried forward to the sub-district level down to the village and the functional aspects of such linkages works in

- providing space in the premises in primary schools,
- procuring material,
- conducting health check-ups,
- supervision and monitoring and sustaining pressure on the quality of performance,
- providing on site support and guidance by the NPRCC and head teachers.

5. Coverage

The overall coverage of ECCE in the 18 project districts has been in two phases and the district wise coverage in each phase is given in the table below:

ECCE Coverage in 18 Districts of DPEP II in Uttar Pradesh

District	Targeted Coverage	Coverage in Phase I (August 1998)	Coverage in Phase II (January 2000)	Total	Remain to be Started
Badaun	150	74	76	150	Nil
Balrampur	12	12	Nil	12	Nil
Bareilly	200	76	124	200	Nil
Basti	150	80	52	132	18
Deona	150	75	75	150	Nil
Firozabad	175	48	90	138	37
Gonda	50	25	25	50	Nil
Hardoi	100	50	50	100	Nil
Jyotibaphule Nagar	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Lakhimpur Kheri	150	75	75	150	Nil
Lalitpur	150	75	75	150	Nil
Maharajganj	150	75	75	150	Nil
Moradabad	75	35	40	75	Nil
Pilibhit	150	74	76	150	Nil
Sant Kabir Nagar	22	Nil	22	22	Nil
Shajahanpur	100	50	50	100	Nil
Siddhartnagar	150	75	75	150	Nil
Sonbhadra	200	89	111	200	Nil
Total	2134	988	1091	2079	55

The Anganwadi Centres selected for coverage in August 1998, under the first phase, continued to operate from their original location, until a decision was jointly taken by the Departments of Basic Education and Women and Child Development to shift the ECCE Centres to the primary school campus.

ECCE is provided primarily through the ICDS. The project interventions in this area are essentially in the convergence mode. A common monitoring format has been developed and is in use by the Anganwadi (ECCE) workers. The ICDS programme has covered many milestones since its inception in 1975. The objectives of the programme are

- (a) to improve the nutritional and health status of pre-school children in the age group of 0-6 years,
- (b) to lay the foundation of proper psychological development of the child,
- (c) to reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and social dropout,
- (d) to achieve effective coordination of policy and implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development, and

- (e) to enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health education. Extensive consultations of State Government with counterparts in Central Government led to addition of pre-school education component with the focus on early joyful learning opportunities in the 3-6 years age group, apart from other services of health, nutrition and convergence. It may be pointed out that 15 days training in two spells is imparted to ECCE instructors and 7 days training is imparted to Anganwadi of ICDS centres. Both the trainings converge on core content of child development activities and development of TLM. Thus, there is convergence of programmes operational in U.P., which is cost friendly and has scope for sharing and consultation with the same management, support and control.

The Balshala targets pre-schoolers along with their older siblings up to 11 years. While the 3-6 year olds are imparted the school readiness package, the older set of children receive primary education. By combining two age sets under the same management structure, it becomes cost friendly and helps in facilitating services. Mainly there are two age groups of children covered under the scheme 3-5 years and 5-11 years within the same premises or in approximate area. At many centres, during field visits, the team found the helper handling age group 3-5 years in their play activities when the teacher was working with higher age group children, i.e., 5-11 years. Both instructor and helper are trained through induction and in-service courses. The play material, kits, and furniture items are provided by the SPO (State Project Office). The play material is based on child development processes. The helper and the instructor are from the same locality and the ECCE centre is run generally in the instructor's house or in open structure constructed by the VEC. Minimum qualification for instructor is Xth class pass and for helper upto 8th class. Village education committee selects both the instructor and the helper. Presently there are 201 operational Balshalas in U.P.

6. Field Visits: Districts Hardoi and Shahjahanpur

Two districts of UP, Hardoi and Shahjahanpur were selected for in-depth study of Balshala centres. These two districts were selected because of similar demographical characteristics such as population, economic activities, literacy rate of men and women and central location with easy accessibility. There are 19 blocks in Hardoi district; out of these 19 blocks, 2 blocks - Sandila and Kothawa - were identified for the study of child development strategies and

management services Out of 25 centres, 6 Balshala centres were randomly selected, (3 from each block) for intensive study but from Shahjehanpur district only one block **Bhavalkhera** was selected due to non-availability of time Here also, six centres were identified for the study The ECCE centres from the two districts are rural and situated in the interior among cluster of houses.

A brief write-up of the visit is given below.

6.1 District Hardoi

Hardoi, a district of U.P is situated on the western side of Lucknow. The total number of Blocks in this district are 19. Hardoi is a historical place. There are diverse views about its origin - Hiran Kashap who was a devotee of Hari ruled it It is also believed that Hardoi has emerged from a Plateau named after Haridevbaksha But it is certain that the original natives of Hardoi belonged to Thathera caste. Aarak Bhil and Rajputs have migrated to Hardoi and settled there. Presently, Hardoi has a heterogeneous population. There is inter-cultural legacy of the synthesis of Hindus and Muslims and similar cultural background.

According to 2001 census, Hardoi stands at 12th place population wise amongst 70 districts of U P. which comprises 2.0 % of total population of U.P. The population is served by central schools, primary schools, college, university and special school for disabled children. Hardoi district has been covered under DPEP programme since 1997. Thus the district education profile exhibits availability of primary education facilities that have received boost under DPEP project plan.

80% of the people of Hardoi are involved in agricultural activities that brings them good income. Industrially, the district is not advanced. There are only a few factories of cement, flour, metal, iron and detergent. Therefore, the people of Hardoi district are not industrially well off But it is indicated that DPEP programmes have shown encouraging results, indicating that gross enrolment rate for primary education has gone up from 86.03 to 96.38 and Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) from 76.58 to 83.31.

During the year 2000-01, there were 25 Balshalas operating in the block of Sandila, Shahbad and Kothawa with enrolment of 510 boys and 503 girls with a total of 1013 studying in Class I. The total literacy rate of Hardoi district according to census 2001 is 42.08- for males and 26.70 for females.

6.2 District Shajahanpur

Shajahanpur district came into existence in the year 1813, when sons of Dariya Khan founded it as a township. Both the brothers had occupied high positions in the royal administration of King Shajahan who was pleased with their services and awarded an estate of 14 villages. One of the brothers got a fort constructed at the confluence of two rivers Garah and Khanit. He brought 52 *pathan* families to his township for settlement and they separated out into different *Muhallas*. Another township Tilhar was built by emperor Akbar. These various administrative units continued up to 1857 and thereafter this township came under the British rule.

Shajahanpur is an agricultural district of U.P. that has 16 Blocks and the main occupation of the people is agriculture. Shajahanpur has produced a host of top ranking freedom fighters, warriors, poets, novelist and drama writers. Over the decades, population of both males and females has increased and there is a significant rise in literacy rate of the people. Literacy rate of males is 60.52 and female literacy rate is 34.68 as compared to 40.18 for males and 14.18 for females in 1991.

There are 1933 primary schools, 265 upper primary schools, 112 senior secondary schools and 6 degree colleges. The following complementary models are operating in the district - (i) **Bal Shala** (3-6 years), (ii) **Shiksha Ghar** (6-11 years), (iii) **Prahar Pathshala** (6-11 years), (iv) **Maktab** (6-11 years), **EGS Centres** (6-8 years) and **ICDS Centres** (0-6 years). DPEP programmes have been launched in 18 districts of U.P. for the universalization of primary education since 1997. The results have been quite encouraging with 100% enrolment and nearly 70% retention and dropout rate has been reduced. For further improvement of quality education at the elementary stage, SSA Programme has been introduced in the State.

7. Observations

7.1 Curriculum

DPEP has experimented with a number of innovative approaches. DPEP in U.P. has revised textbooks and made significant progress in terms of pedagogical renewable. UP, DPEP has produced supplementary teaching learning materials. Interesting experiments have been undertaken in Alternative Schooling Plan. One of the experiments is starting of Balshala for the age-group 3-6-9 years in order to facilitate early childhood development activities as well as education of older siblings. DPEP, UP has achieved significant progress in the planning process of teacher development, community mobilization and building of infrastructures.

The investigating team visited 6 centres in Hardoi district and 6 centres in Shahjehanpur district. At none of the centres visited was any copy of curriculum developed by State Education Department produced. On making queries, the team was given to understand that the curriculum is being evolved at each of the blocks by sharing of experiences and mutual consultation. It was expressed that there are two main principles governing the curriculum framework for ECCE programme - one leading towards **school readiness** and the other **towards socialization of the child**. Pre-school curricular interventions are to be related to class I curriculum particularly language and number. Thus the elements of formal schooling are drawn to a fair start in ECCE centres. Play has been recognized as the main medium of curriculum transaction. Therefore, sequential sets of play material have been prepared by experts in a series of teacher participated workshops with the expertise of resource persons invited to the workshops. Special toys and kits have been prepared and supplied to the centres.

The ECCE centres are provided materials of two kinds, viz., one that would help in running and managing the centres and the other pertaining to all round development of the children through the use of appropriate play way methods with the help of simple teaching learning material, games and toys. While both types of material are made available through grants, there is a component of teaching learning material, called the ECCE kit that is developed by the Anganwadi worker/helper in the course of their training.

The ECCE kit developed and used at the centres was found to be complete and appropriately suited to facilitate a child's development. All of the self-made toys and material were generally not seen at the centres. However, colour, shape and seriation cards, dominos, picture puzzles, flash cards, picture charts, classification and language cards were to be seen in the centres.

The ECCE material is a collection of masks, puppets, picture stories, picture cards, clay marbles, colour discs, beads, seeds, leaves, sticks, doll, manzira for music, picture cut outs, drawings, songs, making garlands etc. Some of the materials are local specific and all the materials are graded according to the age level. Multi-level groupings were observed for performance of activities. The distinctive feature of ECCE curriculum is that the curriculum is in the process of being evolved and has been able to integrate the elements of formal schooling with the play material. Play material is provided at the beginning of the year and consumed items have to be replenished by the teacher and the helper during the session. To this effect, there is a yearly grant of Rs.450/- for the development of teaching-learning materials.

In most instances when the team members visited the centres the Anganwadi workers were found to be carrying out activities with very little self-developed material. But, when asked to demonstrate the use of the available material, they were able to do so. They were able to use the material independent of the activity but were unable to relate the material to the activity. In order to achieve optimal utilization of the materials in accordance with their purpose, the workers require concerted support and guidance to supplement the inputs provided through training

Some major achievements in relation to curriculum development are

- UPDPEP project professionals have developed a calendar of activities and a handbook *Kilkari* for Balshalas (3-6 years) and distributed to all centres. The handbook contents have wide range of play activities with pictures that motivate children to learn through exploration and interaction with instructors, other children and materials
- An important characteristic of curriculum pertains to enhancing personal awareness, emotional well-being, socialization, communication and development of motor skills in children.
- The essential element in planning of curriculum has been **Integration of activities with conceptual framework that supports joyful learning in children through** play activities along with school readiness for Class I. Curriculum reflects children's use of native language and local specific culture through folk songs, stories, puppetry, etc. In addition, puzzles, number dominos and picture cards of animals, birds and trees are used for concept formation.
- An **activity bank** has been developed for upper primary teachers and primary teachers under DPEP II wherein a repertoire of activities and classroom transactional methodologies have been prepared. Apart from this, the Balshalas are provided with storybooks, quiz and puzzle books. A bimonthly newsletter ***Shaikshik 'Prekshak Prekshak'*** and other useful materials are published by SPO which carry details of innovations that could be carried out at Balshalas and Balghars
- Material melas have been organized during 2000-01 at district, block and cluster levels in all DPEP districts. The purpose was to motivate teachers for the preparation of TLM. The teachers prepared, demonstrated and discussed specific material that could be used for ECCE. These efforts were reported to have met with an overwhelming response from teachers.

- The DIETs through BRCs and NPRCs built capability among teachers to develop skills for the preparation of low cost teaching aids during in-service training workshops

7.2 Classroom Organisation and Management

The ECCE Centres were found to be either functioning in rooms or in verandahs in the primary schools. The environment in both the situations varied for obvious reasons. All the material provided to the ECCE centre could be kept in the room when the centre is given a room in the school. ECCE centres in such a condition were able to put up material for display, use the walls for carrying out activities with the children and also have access to the entire lot of material made available to the centres. The situation was quite different where the ECCE centre was functioning in a verandah or in covered but open spaces in the school. The material in such case was stored in a room in the school or in the teacher's home. Open spaces that can not be locked have come in the way of regularly displaying materials and also curbed the use of materials in carrying out activities with children.

Children have been provided mats and carpets for sitting. In most of the ECCE centres visited, the Anganwadi Workers were found to be sitting with the children on the floor in a circle making it possible to interact more directly with them. The children left their sleepers/shoes outside the classroom. Some times the rooms in which the ECCE centres were housed were dark and dingy. There were improper provisions for natural lighting and ventilation. The ECCE Centres in such conditions bore a dreary and dull look.

On our visits to ECCE centres, we found a daily schedule in the Diary of teachers. The timings for Balshala are from 8.30 a.m. to 12.20 p.m.. The special feature of Balshala schedule is that the time for a specific activity varies from 15 minutes to half an hour and it is regulated by group work, lunch time, free play and out-door play activities. There is a balance between activities such as quiet/active, individual/small group /large group, child initiated/teacher directed.

At Gauri Khurd, Shahjanpur district, we found two disabled girls - both of whom had deformity of the foot. The older one had gained confidence after coming to the school and enjoyed drawing sessions along with other children. The younger one was shy and tried to hide her deformity of the foot. This observation reflects inclusion of special needs children in Balshala programmes organized under DPEP.

There were one or two chalkboards in every class which were being used for writing, drawing and fixing of charts. Children mostly learnt from charts, e.g., the name of birds, flowers, animals, etc. Also they enjoyed singing in a chorus and most of the children liked to dance. The helper was also enthused and narrated a story which the children listened attentively. All the children looked clean and tidy, and were very happy to see us. It was observed that play materials should have variety in them and be in sufficient quantity. But in many centres, the play kits, toys, puzzles, etc. were found to be worn out and needed replacement

7.3 Children's Assessment

The progress of individual child needs to be continuously assessed so that it is known how well the child is doing. It is also required to assess the quality of the programme and its effectiveness. In this context, evaluation of child's performance on play activities can be observed and noted against set indicators of growth and development. At this early stage of development, standardized tests may not be used but a record of observations can be made. The observations then can be interpreted through a rating scale. The rating scale may contain broad dimensions of development like physical, social, emotional and intellectual development.

DPEP, U P. has a child development scale. The scale is in a folder, attractive and simple to use. It has three parts, specific to each year of growth. For each year, there are 12-13 items covering four main dimensions of personality, namely, physical development; social and emotional development; language development and number concept. All the items are in the form of questions having Yes/No type of responses. Additionally, there are items for personal data of general nature about the child. The record of these items are kept in the teachers' diary which are then discussed at the monthly meetings with district professionals. On the basis of the outcomes of the assessment, remedial measures are taken by the teachers.

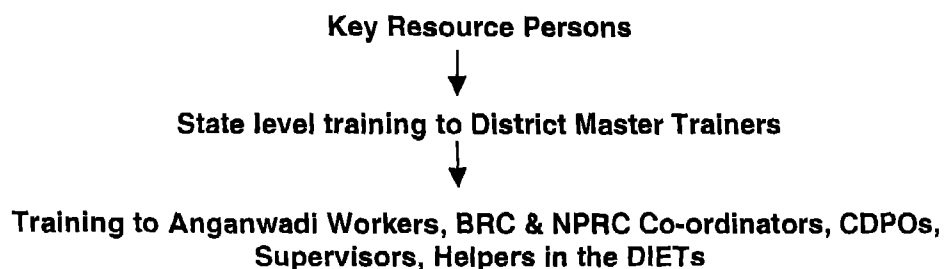
7.4 Teacher Training

Under DPEP programme, which is a government sponsored programme, it is the function of the DIET and SCERT to provide both pre-service and in-service training programmes to teachers/instructors. The programmes are organized to strengthen teacher capabilities in material development and on use of sound pedagogical basis for education. Accordingly, there is provision under DPEP in perspective plan for teacher development activities i.e. training workshops, reflection and visioning workshops for TLM development, special sessions, exhibitions, exposure trips and extension lectures for teachers.

Further, to strengthen teacher performance, decentralized on-site resource facilities have been created in the form of Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Nyaya Panchayat Resource Centres (NPRC) in U P which have been linked vertically to the DIETs. BRC and NPRC coordinators are expected to provide support through classroom visits and discussions. There is a working partnership of DIET-BRC-NPRCs for effective implementation of primary and preprimary education programmes.

Pre-primary teachers and helpers are appointed by the Village Education Committee. The minimum qualification prescribed for preschool (Balshala) instructor is matriculation but on visit to the centres we found many graduates working. The instructor is paid Rs.1000/- p.m. and the helper is paid Rs 300/-p.m.

A two-tier cascade for the training has been followed. A set of key resource persons train the district team of master trainers at the State level. At these trainings the district teams are prepared for training the Anganwadi Workers, ICDS and DPEP functionaries who are responsible for overall implementation, supervision and monitoring of the programme. The key resource persons were drawn from the State Institute of Education (SIE), Allahabad, demonstrators attached to the ECCE centre run by SIE as also from NGOs.



In conducting the training, district specific teams of master trainers were put together, who have trained the Anganwadi Workers and the supervisory staff of ICDS and DPEP.

The **training package** used has been different for the two phases of the ECE programme in DPEP II. In fact, the module has evolved over a period of time, with the experience of implementation that has highlighted gaps and new areas of concern.

For the first phase centres, the SPO developed the training package essentially based on the BEP experience. The training package thus developed was in two parts. The first included background material on various aspects of ECCE, while the second part was concerned with

training strategies, schedule, etc. Supplementary material such as *Meri Anganwadi Mere Sawal* and *Chalo Geet Gaye*, procured from NCERT were also used in the training and copies made available to the trainees

For training on ECE in the Phase II centres, the package was reviewed and revised. The ECE training package, *Adharshila* Part I – that had been developed by the State Institution of Education - was used for the master trainers and Part II for the trainees. This package was wider in scope and included greater details about interaction with community, school readiness, cognitive development, etc. While these issues were touched upon in the earlier round of training, they were elaborated upon in *Adharshila*. Further, it also included many more activities related to the child's development. Both the rounds of training were spread over 10 days for the master trainers and over seven days for the trainees.

7.4.1 Type of Training

Training in ECCE has been of two kinds in DPEP II of Uttar Pradesh, namely, **Induction Training** and **Refresher Training**

7.4.1.1 Induction Training

Developing the capacity of the ECCE (Anganwadi) workers has been emphasized upon in DPEP as this component has not been covered in detail in the three months job course for Anganwadi Workers provided by ICDS. There has been a felt need to supplement the initial training by ICDS with more focused inputs so that Early Childhood Education is handled effectively. Training for ECCE assumes great importance in the context of capacity building of key actors involved in the delivery of ECE services, which includes the ECCE workers and those involved in supervising and monitoring the ECCE programme.

In this background, the training focuses on

- centre management,
- programme planning,
- age-wise group activities,
- use of materials,
- material development,
- thematic approach,
- efforts at community involvement.

Apart from capacity building, the trainings are envisaged to serve the purpose of developing materials that would be used as learning aids in the ECCE centres. In this way, the trainees would not only be able to develop their own material whenever required, but would go back with the set of materials that would support their efforts at running the ECCE centres.

7.4.1.2 Refresher training

This is also a residential training held in the DIETs for seven days. The focus of the training remaining more or less the same, each topic receives detailed treatment that seeks to strengthen the conceptual aspect and also enrich the practical aspect by introducing more activities. For this training, the planner-cum-activity bank, *Kilkari*, developed by SIE was used along with the background material of *Adharshila*.

The basic philosophy of the training of Anganwadi Workers is to take them through the experience of material development and the material thus developed will comprise the ECCE kit to be used at the Anganwadi Centre. The idea is to equip them to replace specific material *from* the kit once they are worn out.

The prescribed list of materials expected to be developed at the training include

1	Colour cards	10.	Flannel Board
2.	Shape cards	11.	Classification cards
3.	Seriation cards	12.	Memory card
4.	Dominos	13	Self corrective card
5	Picture puzzle	14.	Language card
6.	Flash cards	15.	Visual differentiation card
7	Picture charts	16	Worksheets
8	Story cards	17	Ananda and Anandi (stuff~ doll)
9	Puppets	18	Parents of Ananda & Anandi (glove puppets)

The importance of pre-primary education is increasing day-by-day. The Anganwadi workers are solely responsible for the smooth running of pre-primary education programme. For this very purpose, the training of Anganwadi workers under ECCE programme was organized in DIET, Hardoi from 14.9.98 to 20.9.98, 24.12.98 to 30.12.98 and 11.7.2000 to 17.7.2000. The total number of participants in this training was 150 in which Anganwadi workers, BRC co-ordinators and NPRC in-charge participated.

The main focus of this training was that the Anganwadi workers should provide in their centres joyful and child centred education to the children between the age group of 3 to 6 years. Some

useful material viz. puppets, education chart, paper toys, etc. were also prepared by the trainees under the supervision of DIET master trainers for providing developmentally appropriate activities to children along with joyful transactional strategies.

7.5 Community Mobilization

DPEP programme has stressed on sustainability for which community participation is a crucial factor. Efforts under DPEP have been to establish strong linkages between the school and the community with an attitude of ownership of schools and its programmes. Community mobilization is a process of generating awareness among the local people particularly stakeholders i.e. specific target groups and stimulate demand generation for ECCE services organized under DPEP programme

Mothers have an important role in Early Childhood Care and Education. Their perception about education of the girl child and the need and importance of pre-school child development activities has grown over the years. To emphasize the need for women's participation in various developmental and pre-school programmes, 3404 Mother Teacher Associations and 911 women motivator groups have been set up in the entire State of Uttar Pradesh. Every year there is an enhancement of programme initiatives in this direction. VEC members have been given training to sensitize the community members towards mobilization of local resources. Additionally, VECs are given training to conduct surveys for out of school children and to identify common diseases among local children. The household data thus collected provides detailed information on the educational needs of each village. VEC exercises social pressure on the villagers to send their children to school where required. VEC is also responsible for the management of alternative schooling centres, which cater to pre-schooling of young children and enrolment of girls. They are empowered to recruit instructors for ECCE centres, preferably matriculates of the same village, select venue and make payment of honoraria to the instructors and arrange for escorts for girl child, wherever required.

Community participation has received its due place of importance in the implementation of DPEP and this holds good for the ECCE programme as well. Starting the ECCE centres meant intensified efforts to reach out to the parents of eligible children to achieve the ***twofold objective of generating demand for the services proposed to be provided and strengthening ties with parents and the community.*** Efforts were mounted to establish the

much needed link with parents and the community to encourage their proactive role in implementing the ECCE programme.

Parents and members of the Village Education Committee (VEC) have joined hands in the effort at providing quality ECE services. Parents and some members of the village community have begun getting involved in running the ECCE Centres and the VEC has been central to this effort, as it has been vested with financial and overall management responsibilities.

From interactions with parents of children enrolled in the ECCE Centre and members of the VECs, their awareness about the centres was quite evident. Though it was found that the Anganwadi Worker and Helper have been the main source of information, fellow villagers and local level social contacts/interaction have helped in creating awareness about the ECCE Centre. To some extent, awareness creation has also been facilitated by the school teacher and Pradhan. Living in the neighbourhood of the centre was also mentioned by parents to be another means of learning about the ECCE Centre. And once the centres began functioning the information also spread through the children who enrolled in the centres.

Most parents seemed concerned about the centre and what their children are learning. It was clear that the school and the centre are no longer alien to them. For changing the environment, the system had made special efforts to involve the stakeholders, who have responded positively and this is clear from their interest and willingness to contribute in the effective functioning of the centre.

While the awareness levels were high, they are usually unable to make any distinction between the school and the centre. Popular belief has it that the centre is an integral part of the school and details of administrative arrangements, the time bound life span of the ECCE centre, tenured programmatic inputs by DPEP, etc. are neither understood nor a matter of parental/community concern. They are also unaware about the administrative arrangement for implementing the ECCE programme. There is a general hype about the improvement in the functioning of the ECCE Centre and parental excitement stems from the fact that their children are learning more than they used to when the centre was not attached to the school.

It was found that most parents visited the ECCE centre, with only a few who do not go to the centre. Of those who frequented the centre did so once a week or once in 15 days. There are

parents who even went across to the centre every day either out of interest, or to drop in and pick up the child or simply because it is on the way home. It was found that parents are now eager to know about what happens in the centre and also keep track of their children's progress

8. Pattern of Finance

The Balshala Model of DPEP, Lucknow being a governmental initiative, the financial aspects of the ECCE programme were not readily available during the time of the field visit. Therefore, a mention of the same has not been included in the report.

9. Some Highlights

- ◆ The Balshala targets pre-schoolers along with their older siblings up to 11 years. While the 3-6 year olds are imparted the school readiness package, the older set of children receive primary education. By combining two age sets under the same management structure, it becomes cost friendly and helps in facilitating services. Mainly there are two age groups of children covered under the scheme 3-5 years and 5-11 years within the same premises
- ◆ There are two main principles governing the curriculum framework for ECCE programme - one leading towards **school readiness and the other towards socialization of the child**. Pre-school curricular interventions are to be related to class I curriculum particularly language and number. Thus the elements of formal schooling are drawn to a fair start in ECCE centres.
- ◆ The ECCE kit developed and used at the centres was found to be complete and appropriately suited to facilitate a child's development. All of the self-made toys and material were generally not seen at the centres. However, colour, shape and seriation cards, dominos, picture puzzles, flash cards, picture charts, classification and language cards were to be seen in the centres.
- ◆ The essential element in planning of curriculum has been **Integration of activities with conceptual framework that supports joyful learning in children through play** activities along with school readiness for Class I. Curriculum reflects children's use of

native language and local specific culture through folk songs, stories, puppetry, etc. In addition, puzzles, number dominos and picture cards of animals, birds and trees are used for concept formation

- ◆ DPEP, U P has a child development scale. The scale is in a folder, attractive and simple to use. It has three parts, specific to each year of growth. For each year, there are 12-13 items covering four main dimensions of personality, namely, physical development, social and emotional development; language development and number concept. To strengthen teacher performance, decentralized on-site resource facilities have been created in the form of Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Nyaya Panchayat Resource Centres (NPRC) in U.P. which have been linked vertically to the DIETs. BRC and NPRC coordinators are expected to provide support through classroom visits and discussions. There is a working partnership of DIET-BRC-NPRCs for effective implementation of primary and preprimary education programmes.
- ◆ Mothers have an important role in Early Childhood Care and Education. Their perception about education of the girl child and the need and importance of pre-school child development activities has grown over the years. To emphasize the need for women's participation in various developmental and pre-school programmes, 3404 Mother Teacher Associations and 911 women motivator groups have been set up in the entire State of Uttar Pradesh. Every year there is an enhancement of programme initiatives in this direction. VEC members have been given training to sensitize the community members towards mobilization of local resources.
- ◆ Parents and members of the Village Education Committee (VEC) have joined hands in the effort at providing quality ECE services.
- ◆ Most parents seemed concerned about the centre and what their children are learning. The system has made special efforts to involve the stakeholders, who have responded positively and contributed in the effective functioning of the centres.



CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Chapter - IV

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents an overall assessment of the three case studies based on the analysis and interpretation of data, with special reference to the innovations carried out in terms of the parameters studied, i.e., curriculum and Teaching-Learning Material (TLM), classroom organisation and management, teacher training, children's assessment, monitoring and evaluation and community participation. This chapter focusses on the distinctive and innovative features of the organisations studied.

It may be mentioned here that all the three institutions studied, namely, Bal Niketan Sangh, Indore, Bodh Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur and Balshala under DPEP Lucknow are effectively implementing the ECCE programme for the upliftment of the weaker sections of the society with the active participation of the community

Briefly talking about the philosophies of each organisation, the **Bal Niketan Sangh (BNS), Indore** has launched child development and care programmes for children of middle-class and low-income groups in semi-urban areas, remote village hamlets and tribal groups of Indore district under the leadership of Ms. Shalini Tai, with the active support of BNS management and community. **The scheme in itself is an innovation in terms of optimum utilization of space, geared up community support system and mobilization and convergence of BNS's consultative efforts** These efforts have been successful to a large extent. On the BNS campus, there are various structural units for teacher training, TLM development, ECCE centres and primary school education (with successful attempts at mainstreaming) These units work together under the academic umbrella of BNS for enhancement of child development activities and quality of education All the programmes have bottoms-up decision-making approach on school readiness, literacy skills and women empowerment issues The teachers are child-friendly in their behaviour and evince commitment. **The most appealing feature of BNS which attracts children towards the ECCE centre, is the nature of love, security and prepared development environment, which is maintained throughout their programmes and activities.**

Bodh Shiksha Samiti (BSS), has launched programmes for Quality Basic Education and Child Development Programmes in Jaipur slums and rural areas of Alwar and Ajmer districts. The network of operational centres has evolved as a result of community mobilization and Bodh's pedagogical interventions. Bodh's programme has taken shape in an area where the community is traditional, economically weak and socially backward. A special feature of the BSS is the role of mother-teacher which is vital to the Bodh's philosophy. The mother-teacher creates an atmosphere of love and security for the child. The vision of Bodh is embodied in three cordial principles, namely, quality, human dignity and democratic way of life. The programmes of Bodh Shiksha Samiti revolve around **emotional and social development of children** which is a key pedagogical issue for the children of weaker section. Complementary programmes of BSS include **Bodhshalas, Rajkiya Janshalas, Samudayik Janshala, Shikshanchal Shikshak Pahal and working with mainstream schools.**

Balshala under DPEP Lucknow caters to 3-6 year age group. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in Uttar Pradesh was launched as part of the National Programme of Action (NPA) of the Central Government to reaffirm the national commitment to Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). Under the plan of action, it is intended to provide free and compulsory quality education up to the age of eleven years. DPEP programmes are contextual and local specific that has entailed area planning and decentralized management with district as the unit of planning. DPEP programmes have accelerated alternative schooling, teacher development, TLM development and teacher training, ECCE services and community mobilization. DPEP in Uttar Pradesh with its continuous thrust on improvement of quality of pre-primary and primary education has progressed well.

The strategy for ECCE in DPEP in Uttar Pradesh has been to work in a convergent mode with ICDS. The major initiatives of the ECCE here have been to establish linkages between pre-school and primary by synchronizing timings of the ECCE centre with that of primary and to locate them in the proximity of the primary school. ECCE here is provided primarily through ICDS, hence the project interventions are essentially in the convergent mode. The programme for ECCE includes Balshala (3-6 years), Shiksha Ghar (6-11 years) and Shishu Shiksha Kendra (0-6 years).

The three organisations, namely, BNS, Indore; BSS Jaipur and Balshala, Lucknow have demonstrated innovative practices in the transaction of ECCE programme. The conclusions drawn from the three case studies in terms of the parameters studied are discussed below:

◆ Curriculum

At the **Bal Niketan Sangh**, the curricular interventions have been planned according to the thematic approach, using bottoms up approach. The curriculum recognizes the importance of development of creativity and integration of various developmental areas. A special feature of the curriculum at BNS is that it is **structured on a continuum from the pre-primary stage to early primary stage for smooth transaction**. The curriculum has elements of innovations in terms of graded material, play toys and user-friendly teaching-learning materials. A redeeming feature of the curriculum at BNS is the slogan '**Baste ka bhoj halka karo**', i.e., 'No bags in pre-school'. The TLMs prepared have a lot of variety and sequential development order in the material on the lines of the Montessori Method.

The **Bodh Shiksha Samiti** has adopted a flexible approach in curriculum design and operational strategies aiming towards a holistic development of the child. Realizing the importance of **a balanced and healthy growth for children**, the Bodh curriculum for ECCE has given a place of prominence to the **social and emotional needs of children** and devised appropriate strategies/activities to accomplish the same. Bodh follows a multilevel approach and, therefore, has three levels of pre-schoolers, namely, **Gulab Samooh** (3-4 years), **Kamal Samooh** (4-5 Years) and **Juhi Samooh** (5-6 Years). The curriculum reflects the use of **pedagogical principles of 'known to unknown' and 'simple to complex' for conceptual development in children**. The curriculum also reflects integration of learning experiences, which are related to real life situations and immediate environment of the learners. There is enough scope in the curriculum for the development of basic skills through the process of identification, comparison, classification and sequencing through group and individual activities.

In the **Balshala model of DPEP**, there are two main principles guiding the framework for ECCE curriculum. one, leading **towards school readiness** and the other, **towards socialisation of the child**. The aim is to relate the pre-school curricular interventions to Class I curriculum, particularly Language and Mathematics, thus providing for linkages between pre-school and primary school. The Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) are a collection of masks, puppets, picture stories, picture cards, beads, puzzles, clay, toys, etc. Materials are graded and local

specific and cater to the multi-level approach. There is a yearly grant of Rs.450 for the development of TLMs

To sum-up, it may be mentioned that the three institutions visited show a lot of variations and flexibility in the curriculum and in the preparation of TLMs for the ECCE programme. Individual institutions have come out with their own innovative strategies for contextualising the curriculum and TLM to maintain the local specificity for successful implementation of the ECCE curriculum

◆ **Classroom Organisation and Management**

The **Bal Niketan Sangh** has a network of ECCE centres consisting of Jhula Ghars, Anganwadis and Balwadis. The learners at the centre are placed at three levels, namely, **Shishu Varg** (3-4 years), **Bal Varg** (4-5 years), and **Swagat Varg** (5-6 years). The children move from lower to higher levels according to their levels of achievement and comprehension of materials to which they are exposed. Regarding classroom organisation and management, it was observed that a child-friendly and a loving environment prevailed in all the centres visited. The classes were well organized and well-planned with small group activities and active participation of children. A special feature of the classroom process was the **behaviour of teachers at the BNS centres towards children which was universally observed to be affectionate, loving and caring**. The teachers were found to be sensitive towards the child's needs. Self-introspection done by teachers in their **"do and review meetings"** helps them in the successful implementation of activities. Rooms were found to be spacious for the conduct of activities, both in small as well as large groups. The classes were found to be neat and tidy with attractive display of material including children's work. Learning corners were seen in the classroom where children were free to play.

Bodh Shiksha Samiti has evolved its own system of grouping of children in the classrooms where the boundaries of grade-norms have been done away with. The advantage of this multi-level grouping is that there is ample scope for **child-to-child learning and socialization process having positive effect on the emotional development of children**. Children move to the higher levels on the basis of their interest and performance. The activities devised at the Bodh ECCE centre provides for a well planned, overall development of all children in the classroom. The conduct of activities focusses on **teacher directed vs. child centered, individual vs. groups, set vs. open, physically active vs. physically quiet and development of body vs. development of mind**. There are learning corners in each

classroom where children have the freedom to play and experiment. The TLMs are developed by Bodh teachers periodically and efforts are made to replace the old/worn out material regularly

Regarding the organisation of activities in the **Balshala model of DPEP, Lucknow**, the ECCE centres were found to be functioning in rooms or in verandahs in the premises of the primary schools. As a result, display of material and children's work, as also shortage of material was a problem area faced by the teachers in the ECCE centres, particularly those centres which were functioning in the verandahs. During the field-visits, children were found to be sitting on mats. An interesting feature was the interaction of the ECCE workers with children which encouraged a loving and caring attitude on the part of the teachers. Some features that were found to be lacking in the centres involved proper lighting and ventilation. Regarding the preparation and use of TLM, it was observed that most of the materials used were worn out and needed replacement. However, on interacting with the teachers, it was found that since **there is no proper place for storage, development of material is a slow process and therefore, not enough material were available at the centre**. In one or two centres, children with special needs were also found to be participating in the ECCE programme which is a positive impact in the context of integration of children with special needs.

◆ **Teacher Training**

The quality of education provided in the schools depends to a great extent upon the quality of teachers. The quality of teachers, in turn, plays a significant role in the development and growth of children. This, to a large extent depends upon the quality and effectiveness of the training programme being imparted to them, both pre-service and in-service. A very brief account of the teacher training programmes in the three institutions studied is discussed below.

The **Bal Niketan Sangh** appoints teachers who are trained in Montessori education for their Jhula Ghars. The BNS has devised certain workable training strategies like short-term orientation programmes, academic meetings and '**arranged workshops**' for developing pedagogical skills of the teachers. The training programme/workshops at BNS are residential in nature and are held at the teacher training institute of BNS, Indore. As is mentioned in the case study, the BNS conducts a two-year pre-school training programme for prospective teachers as a pre-service course. Further the organisation also provides training to the anganwadi workers for three months as induction course under ICDS. Additionally, six days need-based workshops

are arranged in specific areas for teachers, supervisors and helpers by turns. This strategy helps in promoting development of skills amongst teachers for handling children in the ECCE programme. BNS also organizes need-based programmes for their workers ranging from 6-15 days. There are also need based special sessions arranged for teachers for providing experiences in art, music, health and hygiene. A novel feature of the teacher development programme at BNS is the '**planned interactive sessions**', where teachers, teacher educators, workers, local community groups and experts interact and share their experiences and problems for the improvement of the programme. Additionally, teachers are guided and counseled for appropriate pedagogical approaches at monthly meetings, supervised by a dedicated group of young active group of lady co-ordinators. These meetings, seminars, etc. are mandatory for teachers and workers for giving feedback and for the on-going improvement process. As per schedule, the teacher has to interact with community social groups-parents and Nigrani Committees, VECs and management representatives and professionals

The **Bodh Shiksha Samiti** in its teacher training programmes subscribes to the theory of the initiation of its teachers into its own philosophy of education and child development practices. According to Bodh philosophy, teacher training is the backbone of any successful education programme. Teacher preparation is the heart of the ECCE programme for the Bodh Samiti. Therefore, all new teachers are inducted to their philosophy through a training cycle, that is, sequential - the induction course of three months followed by yearly one-month teacher development course and training workshops of seven days for TLM development. There is also a pre-service training course of 21 days duration for mother-teachers followed by a six-day refresher course periodically. **Bodh does not support the policy of recruiting trained teachers.** During the induction course, the teachers share ideas, exchange experiences and introspect on their own role and their own experiences as a child in school. The fresh recruits are indoctrinated in Bodh's philosophy, the principles of which are **relevance, equity, absence of fear and freedom to the child.** The concept of mother-teacher along with a teacher in the classroom is a special feature of the BSS. **The role of mother-teacher is vital to the Bodh's philosophy.** The presence of a mother-teacher, who is from the same locality helps in creating an atmosphere of love and security for the children. She provides support to the children at the centre in terms of cleanliness, self-help skills, care and use of materials.

The **Balshala under DPEP** is a Government sponsored programme. To strengthen the teacher training/performance, decentralized on-site resource facilities have been created in the form of BRCs and NPRCs in Uttar Pradesh which have been vertically linked to the DIET. Here, the

pre-primary teachers and helpers are appointed by the VECs. A two-tier training cascade model has been followed for training of ECCE teachers as detailed in the case study of Balshala. In conducting training programmes, the district specific teams of master trainers are put together to train the anganwadi workers and the supervisory staff of ICDS and DPEP. Since the ECCE centres in Uttar Pradesh falls under ICDS, there has been a felt need to supplement the initial training by ICDS to its workers, with more focused inputs so that ECCE is handled effectively. Training for ECCE assumes great importance in the context of capacity building of key functionaries involved in the delivery of ECCE services, which include the ECCE workers and those involved in the supervising and monitoring of ECCE programme. The training focuses upon the centre's management, programme planning, age-wise group activities, use of materials, TLM development, thematic approach and community involvement. The emphasis of teacher training programmes in the Balshala model of DPEP has been on providing joyful and child-centered education to children at the ECCE centres. The DPEP conducts two types of training programmes for ECCE workers, namely, **Induction Training** and **Refresher Training**.

◆ Children's Assessment

Continuous and comprehensive assessment is a vital and important component of the teaching learning process. In any educational programme, it is necessary to assess both the implementation of the programme and the progress of the individual child consistently and continuously.

At the **Bal Niketan Sangh**, the teachers were observed to be using a variety of assessment techniques to assess children's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development. There are no tests (verbal or written) to assess children's level of development. Observation of children's behaviour and performance is the main technique employed by the teachers to record the progress of each child individually. The BNS philosophy believes in stress free education for its children and does not use force or punishment. As per the observations, teachers were found to be using ***pragati-patra*** (check list) for assessing the learning outcomes of the children and then reporting the same to the parents. **Remedial sessions are organized without undue pressure on children.** Teachers also use indicators for assessing creativity such as novelty, flexibility and fluency in their drawing, painting, story-telling and dramatization activities. Creativity has been given a place of prominence in the BNS curriculum and thus children's arts and crafts activities have been given adequate space in the ECE programme.

The **Bodh Shiksha Samiti** has adopted a comprehensive, continuous evaluation procedure for children's assessment. There is daily assessment of children's work with structured observation by teachers. The BSS is of the view that the child has a great potential to grow and develop in a stimulating environment and therefore, he/she should be provided with enriching experiences in a conducive environment, designed for his/her growth. Bodh's philosophy does not subscribe to the view that the teacher is like a doctor who is to diagnose the ailments (or misbehaviour) of children. The Bodh follows a multi-level approach where children are grouped according to their developmental levels and performance. The teachers and co-ordinators at Bodh are oriented periodically towards professional perception of behavioural pointers for progress of the child. In this whole process of children's assessment, the views of parents and mother-teachers are considered significant since they are the caretakers of their children.

In the **Balshala model of DPEP Lucknow**, children's assessment is considered to be an important indicator for assessing the child's progress. At this early stage of development, standardized tests are not used but a record of systematic observations by teachers can be made. Teachers also use rating scale to measure broad dimensions of development such as physical, motor, cognitive, creativity, etc. The rating scale used by the teachers is in three parts, specific to each year of growth. All the items in this rating scale are in the form of questions which have to be filled-in by the teachers on the basis of the children's progress. Additionally, there are also items for personal data of general nature about the child. The record of these items are kept in the teachers dairy which are then discussed in monthly meetings with parents on the one hand and with managers on the other. Remedial measures, if required, are taken accordingly.

◆ **Community Participation**

Non-involvement of the community has been a major problem in school education. During the last one or two decades, there has been little or no interaction between the school system and the community. In order to bring about the improvement in the quality of school education, there is a need to sensitize the local community towards educational concerns for the children.

The **Bal Niketan Sangh** has made sincere efforts to establish strong community rapport and organize meetings, *jathas*, *bal melas*, etc. for mobilising the community and their active participation in the ECCE programme. The community has been motivated to provide

resources for the ECCE centres such as free use of residential accommodation and the involvement of mother groups in development of teaching-learning material. **Community representation is ensured in the BNS forum through its electoral procedure every two years** It has successfully brought about community participation by constituting various village and tribal level resource groups from the local community Direct interaction of management with these resource groups or their leaders has largely been successful in eliciting community support and awareness By motivating the community to provide free use of residential space, the BNS has created a positive impact on the community and the Sangh management interface. It has provided opportunities for dialogues between the community, teachers and the centre. An interesting feature of the BNS programme is **encouraging community to participate in the management and functioning of the ECCE centres** The '*pre-school social groups*' including parents, gram committees and VEC look after health care, hygiene, habits of healthy living and a part of experiential curriculum related to nature study, local folklore, etc. The community members are given two days orientation in child development, play-way activities and health care and they help in the successful management of ECCE programme.

In the **Bodh Shiksha Samiti model of ECCE**, community participation encompasses contributing and sharing of resources and skills to be gained on both sides, i.e., the community on the one hand and the school on the other hand An important feature of the Bodhshalas regarding the ECCE programme is the building of strong bonds and bridges with the local community. The most distinctive feature of the Bodh Samiti is that its organisation has brought various child care groups under its auspices to work for achievement of a common target which is provision of child-friendly education to deprived sections of the society Awareness programmes for community elders and mothers have effectively been conducted through planned meetings and informal interactions Mothers' role in the education of the young is assumed to be of great importance. Bodh has actively organized women's collectives in the form of Mahila Group and Kishori Group. The community has come forward in a big way to support the programmes of BSS and in strengthening the ECCE programme for their children.

Balshala model of DPEP, Lucknow has stressed on sustainability of the programme for which community participation is a crucial factor. Efforts have been undertaken to establish strong linkages between the school and the community with an attitude of ownership of schools and its programmes Mothers have an important role in the education of their children. Emphasizing the need for women's participation in various developmental and pre-school activities, 3404 Mother-Teacher Associations and 911 women motivator groups have been set up in the entire

State of Uttar Pradesh VEC members have been given training to sensitize the community members towards mobilization of local resources for ECCE. The DPEP has intensified its efforts to reach out to the parents of eligible children to achieve the twofold objective of generating demand for the services proposed to be provided for pre-school education and strengthening ties with parents and the community. Efforts have also been mounted to establish the much needed link with parents and the community to encourage their proactive role in implementing the ECCE programme. Parents and members of the VECs have joined hands in the effort at providing quality ECE services. An interesting feature of the ECCE here was that most of the parents were found to be visiting the ECCE centres to enquire about their child's progress and also help in the functioning of the centres.

On the basis of the above discussion, which is based on analysis of data and overall findings, it may be summed up that three organisations studied, namely, BNS, BSS and Balshala, DPEP have evolved their own philosophies and strategies for the successful implementation of ECE programmes at their respective centres, one thing common among them being the target groups of children of weaker section of the society to which they are catering. Certain specific features of the organisations as discussed above in brief on the different parameters indicate that the organisations have done well in term of taking the ECCE programme to the weaker sections of the society and providing quality ECCE to young children. They have also made efforts in providing linkages between pre-school and primary and aimed at mainstreaming of children.

In conclusion, it may be mentioned that the present study has conducted case studies of three organisations, namely, Bal Niketan Sangh, Indore, Bodh Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur and Balshala model under DPEP, Lucknow. Out of the three, two are NGOs (namely, BNS and BSS) whereas Balshala under DPEP is a Government sponsored initiative and is managed by the State Government of U.P. The NGOs have demonstrated the success of their ECCE programme through active involvement and participation of the community in their endeavour and made provisions for a rigorous monitoring system. A dedicated group of teachers and their caring and loving attitude towards children has gone a long way in the effective implementation of the pre-school programme. The Government sponsored Balshala under DPEP, on the other hand, has also made successful attempts at improving the quality of ECCE, with special focus on establishing linkages between pre-primary and primary schooling.



CHAPTER V

**REPLICABILITY IN THE
CONTEXT OF SSA**

Chapter - V

Replicability in the Context of SSA

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) realizes the importance of ECCE and has made provision of Rs.15 lakh per year per district for interventions in ECCE, which has been envisaged as an innovative activity. It provides for strengthening of the pre-school component of ICDS as well as setting up new ECCE centres. Major interventions proposed will include organisation of training programmes, preparation of advocacy material and establishing linkages between pre-primary and primary for improving the quality of education. Some major findings of the study, which may be considered under SSA, are given below:

- For achieving the objectives of SSA through involvement of the community in management of the school system, the urgent requirement is of equipping communities with knowledge and skills required for managing schools and making them schools of the community, by the community and for the community, including the ECCE programme which forms an important part of the elementary education. This has been aptly demonstrated by Bal Niketan Sangh and Bodh Shiksha Samiti.
- Community participation brought about by constituting various village and tribal level resource groups from local community and formation of '**pre-school social groups**' including parents, gram committees and VEC members for the welfare of pre-schoolers can be considered under SSA, which has been successfully implemented by the Bal Niketan Sangh in their ECCE programmes.
- Similarly, the Bodh Shiksha Samiti has succeeded in building strong bonds and bridges with the local community by bringing about various **child care groups** under its auspices to work for achievement of a common target which is provision of child-friendly education to deprived sections of society. Bodh has actively organised **women's collectives** in the form of Mahila Group and Kishori Group. These models can be adopted in States and districts under the SSA.

- Under DPEP, U.P , 3404 **Mother-Teacher Associations** and 911 **women motivator groups** have been set up in the entire State of Uttar Pradesh. These groups have been given training to sensitize the community towards mobilization of local resources for ECCE. These can be utilized under SSA for capacity building of community for providing quality ECCE and for establishing linkages between pre-school and primary. These groups can also be used to sensitize parents towards the importance of ECCE.
- SSA realizes the importance of ECCE, which has been envisaged as an innovative activity. Major interventions proposed include organisation of training programmes, preparation of advocacy material and establishing linkages between pre-primary and primary for improving quality of education. The innovative practices carried out by Bal Niketan Sangh for teacher development programmes in terms of organizing the '**arranged workshops**' and planned '**interactive sessions**' where teachers, teacher educators, workers, local community groups and experts interact and share their experiences can be well-thought of under SSA for capacity building of teachers.
- The role of **mother teachers**, which is vital to the Bodh's philosophy, helps in creating an atmosphere of love and security for children and this can be adopted under SSA by recruiting and appointing 'mother teachers' for ECCE programmes. The 'mother teacher' will not only help the ECE workers in organizing activities in the classroom but also provide security and love to children.
- As is clear from the various case studies, the training programmes are self-sufficient and self-contained where teachers are made **self-reliant and professionally sound in pedagogical skills** with regular introspection sessions for teachers aiming towards improvement of the programme. The principle of **relevance, equity, absence of fear and freedom to the child** can be instilled in teachers during their induction/refresher training programmes under SSA, which may act as key factors in the successful implementation of the ECCE programme.
- One of the major interventions proposed under SSA is the preparation of advocacy material for quality ECCE programmes. The case studies of BNS and BSS as also Balshala have demonstrated the preparation of material aiming towards school readiness of pre-school children with special focus on **socialization processes** and **appropriate emotional development of children**. The organisations have also shown

the multi-level grouping of children based on their age group (such as formation of **Shishu Varg**, **Bal Varg** and **Swagat Varg** in **BNS** and **Gulab Samooh**, **Kamal Samooh** and **Juhi Samooh** in **BSS**) for which appropriate material has been developed by these organisations. The experiences of these organisations as mentioned in their respective case studies can be considered and replicated while implementing ECCE under SSA.

Finally, the case studies have successfully come out with certain innovative practices in curriculum development, classroom organisation and management, teacher training, children's assessment and in the active role of community in implementing the ECCE programme. These innovative practices may be considered, keeping in view the contextuality of the ECCE programme for implementation of the same under SSA.



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APPENDICES

- ♦ *Tools (I-VI)*
- ♦ *List of Organisations*

I. General Information Format

(For Principal / Centre Head)

Date of Visit: _____

Time. _____

Place. _____

Name of ECCE Centre _____

I. General

- 1 Name of Organization' _____
- 2 Address & Phone No. _____

- 3 Village _____
 District _____
 State _____
- 4 Number of ECE Centers operational _____
- 5 Total number of Workers at the Centre _____
 - a) Male _____
 - b) Female _____
 - c) No. of helpers, if any _____
- 6 Number of children enrolled in the centre till date: _____
 - a) Boys _____
 - b) Girls _____
 - c) Number of special needs children, if any _____
7. Number of children present on the day of the visit _____

8. Enrollment date for last 3 years:

Year	No. of children enrolled			No. of children dropped out during the session	No. of children enrolled in primary School from the centre	
	Total	Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls
1999-2000						
2000-2001						
2001-2002						

9. Number of Sections in the centre _____

Section/Level	Children		Age Group	Remarks
	Boys	Girls		
A				
B				
C				

10. Regularity at the centre

For children (Average attendance to be filled as indicated in the table)

Year	Total No. of working days in a year	Average attendance	Boys Average Attendance	Girls Average Attendance	Remarks
1999-2000					
2000-2001					
2001-2002					

11. In case of low attendance, give the reasons. What support do you provide to improve regularity of children?

12. For teachers

Year	Total No. of working days in a year	Average attendance	Teachers		Helper	Remarks
			Male	Female		
1999-2000						
2000-2001						
2001-2002						

13. How do you facilitate teachers' regularity?

14. Any innovative schemes for monitoring teachers' performance?

II. Physical Facilities

- 15 Infrastructure facilities: available and used

(i) Physical facilities

Availability Yes / No

Usability Yes / No

(ii) Play materials and equipments

Availability Yes / No

Usability Yes / No

(iii) Work areas / learning corners in the classroom

Availability

Yes / No

Usability

Yes / No

(iv) Any other

16. Mention innovations used in respect of:

(i) Setting / arrangements

(ii) Material Design

(iii) Organization of play activities

(iv) Any other

III. Training Profile

17(a). Are all the teachers/workers trained?

Yes/No

(b) What type of training is being organized for the teacher?

(i) Pre-service

Yes / No

If yes, specify pre-service training programmes organized:

Type _____

Duration _____

Organizing agency _____

- | | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| (ii) | In-service training programmes | Yes / No |
| | If yes, indicate the in-service training programme organized: | |
| (i) | General Orientation | Yes/No |
| (ii) | On Site Guidance | Yes/No |
| (iii) | Supervised on job training | Yes/No |
| (iv) | Any other | |
18. How do you identified training needs of teachers?
19. What are innovative features of training programme? Mention under following heads:
- | | |
|-------|-------------------------------------|
| (i) | Training needs assessment procedure |
| (ii) | Training manual |
| (iii) | Training material |
| (iv) | Implementation strategy |
| (v) | Any other |
20. Did you try out innovation of training workers? Yes /No
If Yes, What is its impact?

II. Interview Schedule for Officials / Manager

Date: _____
Time: _____
Place: _____

1. Name of the Manager: _____
2. Designation _____
3. Address, Ph. No. _____

- (a) Year of Commencement of the center _____
- (b) Duration of the ECCE Project _____
- (c) Category of Project – Center Sector / State Sector /NGO/DPEP/Any other
- (d) Nature of Project – Rural/ Urban/ Semi-rural
- (e) Annual cost per child _____
4. Total Years of experience in ECCE in this project: _____
5. What are the goals of the project?
 - (i) Long term
 - (ii) Short term
6. What are the project objectives for the center?

7(a). What are the minimum qualifications for workers?

(i) Academic

(ii) Professional

(b) What is the existing staffing position of the center?

Year	No. of Teachers		No. of Teachers		Teacher (Adult)-Pupil Ratio	No. of Helpers/Ayas
	Trained	Untrained	Male	Female		
1999-2000						
2000-2001						
2001-2002						

8. What types of curriculum frame work/ activity schedule for the ECCE center is being carried out? (Attach a copy)

9. What are the specific features of the curriculum followed at the responsibility ECCE centers in respect of:

(i) Child's development

(ii) Children's experiences

(iii) Primary school readiness

10. Is there any planned activity workbook devised?
If Yes, What are its key features?

Yes / No

11(a). Mention innovative elements in the curriculum in terms of -

- TLM/Play material
- Transactional Strategies
- Monitoring and assessment

(b) Extent of the local specific elements in TLM development.

- Motivation of team members

12. What are some effective innovative practices being followed at your center? Please briefly describe.

- Classroom organization
- Curriculum Transaction
- TLM and play material used
- Teacher- child feedback
- Community participation
- Linkage with primary school
- Assessment of Teacher's performance

13 Do you think your ECCE programme is different from others? Yes/ No
If Yes, How?

14 What other services are provided to the children by the organization? Please write the existing facilities under each head:

- Health
- Nutrition
- Referral (special needs child)
- Any other

15 What is the nature of training provided to the helper/teachers? How do you assess the training needs of the workers? Any training modules developed(supply a copy)

Type	Organizing agency	Duration/Scheduling time	Strategy	Any innovation introduced

16. How do you encourage community participation? What is the nature of support provided by the community?

17. Do you hold parent-teacher meetings? If so what are some important issues raised by the parents Mention the changes that you have enforced as a result of the meetings for running the centre?

- 18 Do you have any Resource center for ECCE teachers? Yes/ No
If Yes, How does it function?
19. Any advisor/ consultant/ specialist you appoint/ invite for improvement of the quality of the programme of the center (please attach a copy of the list)
- 20 What are your strategies to establish linkage between ECCE and primary education?
21. Mention some significant aspects/ priorities of your ECCE programme
22. What are the difficulties you face in implementing innovative practices? Please mention ways as you try to overcome the constraints?
23. How do you monitor efficiency of the responsibility centers?
- 24(a). What is the perspective plan of the ECCE centers (5 years)
- (b) What new thrusts are being evolved?
- 25 Did you try any innovations in the functioning of ECCE centers? What feedback did you receive?

26. Do you hold special session with the parents to offer information on child development?
If yes, what strategies do you follow? Yes/ No
27. Identify your areas of strength?
28. Do you organize interactive sessions for childcare workers and primary teachers? If so what special programme activities are implemented for transition of child from ECCE to primary school?
29. What are your programmes for sustainability of knowledge and skills for early childhood development carried out under your supervision?
30. Who looks after the improvement of building and its repairs? How often is it done?

III. Interview Schedule for ECCE Workers

Date: _____
Time: _____
Place: _____

I. General Information

1. Name of the ECCE worker _____
Age _____ Sex _____
2. Resident of the same village Yes/No
3. Qualifications
(a) Educational Qualifications: _____
(b) Professional Qualifications: _____
4. Number of years of experience in ECCE: _____
5. For how many years have you been working in the centre _____ years
6. In-service training programmes attended by you (during the last 3 years)

Year	Title of the Programme	Frequency	Duration	Focus of the Programme	Organized by whom	Gains/ Usefulness
1999-2000						
2000-2001						
2001-2002						

- 7(a). Pre-service training for ECCE attended by you. Yes/No
- (b) If yes, mention year, duration of course attended and the agency that organized it:
Year _____ Duration _____ Agency _____
8. Age group of children under care _____

9. Language spoken by children at home _____ at school _____
10. In case of gap, how do you bridge the gap between the dialect spoken by child at home and language used at school?
11. Why do you think ECCE is necessary for children?
12. How has your centre helped the children in terms of: -
- (i) Cleanliness
 - (ii) Discipline
 - (iii) Social Behaviour
 - (iv) Toilet Training
 - (v) Waiting for the teacher's intervention
 - (vi) Sharing of Toys
 - (vii) Co-operation
 - (viii) Independent Working
 - (ix) Self-Confidence
 - (x) Caring
 - (xi) Empathy
 - (xii) Concern for other children
 - (xiii) Stress Management
13. What is the daily time schedule followed at the ECCE centre? (Supply a copy)

- 14 What kind of activities are organized at the centre:
- (i) Name the indoor activities organized by you.
 - (ii) Name the outdoor activities organized by you.
 - (iii) How often in a week do you organize out door activities?
 - (iv) How do you start the session with the children (warming up)?
 - (v) How do you end up the day schedule with the children?
- 15 What kind of activities are you conducting for the following areas of child development? (Specify approaches used and behaviour indices)
- (a) Physical and Motor Development
 - (b) Language Development
 - (c) Social and emotional development
 - (d) Cognitive Development
 - (e) Creativity Development
 - (f) Any other
 - (g) Some innovations introduced in respect of above dimensions.
- 16 What kind of play material is being used by you for conducting activity sessions' -
- (a) Self made
 - Provided by Organization
 - Locally available
 - Provided by Community/Parents
 - Collection by Teacher

Developed/collected by teacher

Collection by Children

Play Kits

Any other

(b) Rate the quality of play materials (Tick mark)

(a) Adequate/Inadequate

(b) Local specific/not local specific

(c) Manipulative/not manipulative

(c) Rate the Design/structure of play items

Innovative/Conventional

If innovative describe innovation used.

17 How do you assess the development of children under your care? Mention methods and available records against the following: -

(i) Observation (non-participatory)

Yes/No

(ii) Participatory observation

Yes/No

(iii) Children's performance index

Yes/No

(iv) Worksheets review

Yes/No

(v) Children's Records/Teacher's diary (anecdotes)

Yes/No

(vi) Parent's feedback

Yes/No

(vii) Any other

18. How do you encourage a child to change behaviour for improvement? How are the activities differently organized as compared to usual ways?

19. Do you find that in a group activity the boys dominate?

Yes/No

If yes, how do you foster Gender Equity?

20. How often do you share the child's progress with the parents?

- 21(a) Do you plan your activities before conducting? Yes/No
- (b) If yes, how often (tick mark)
- (i) Daily
 - (ii) Weekly
 - (iii) Monthly
 - (iv) Quarterly
- (c) How do you adapt it to the activities undertaken?(balancing of rigorous and quiet activities)
- (d) What are the important things that you keep in mind while planning activities?
- 22 In what ways do you conduct the daily activities at the centre making it child centered and friendly?
23. Besides pre-school education, is there any other service being provided at the centre? Mention significant events of its appropriateness.
- (i) Health
 - (ii) Nutrition
 - (iii) Immunization
 - (iv) Referral
 - (v) Any other
 - (vi) Give brief details of the striking events?

24. In what ways does the community/parents help in the running of the centre?
- Material resources
 - Financial
 - Voluntary service (specify)
 - Any other
25. Are there any special need children attending the centre? If yes, how do you make specific arrangements for their needs?
- Specific needs assessment
 - Curricular adaptation
 - Adaptation of play material/equipments
 - TLM adaptations
 - Arrangements for access
 - Referral
26. What kind of interaction do you have with the primary schools in your area?
27. How often do you hold meetings with primary teachers of neighbourhood schools? What are the planned activities for the transaction of children from ECCE centres to primary school?
28. How has ECCE helped children to prepare for primary school? Please report some successful experiences.

29. Do you think there are any innovative features in the ECCE activities at your centre? Yes/No
If yes, briefly describe its structure.
30. .Mention innovation strategies devised for the following purposes. -
- (i) Classroom organization (space utilization and settings of work areas)
 - (ii) Curriculum Transaction (integration of play techniques)
 - (iii) TLM and play material used
 - (iv) Teachers relationship with children (trust, love and security)
 - (v) Community participation and support
 - (vi) Linkage with primary-school
 - (vii) Children's participation in play activities
31. What suggestions would you like to recommend for the improvement of the ECCE programmes of your centres?
32. What are the problems/constraints being faced by you in implementing the innovations? How do you overcome the difficulties if any?

IV. Interview Schedule for Parents

Date: _____
Time _____
Place: _____

1. Name of the Respondent _____
2. Relation of the Respondent with the child _____
3. Number of children attending the centre _____
4. Name of your child in ECCE centre _____
5. Age of the child as on the day of visit _____
6. Number of brothers and sisters elder to the child _____
7. (a) Educational/Qualification of -
Father _____
Mother _____
(b) Occupation of -
Father _____
Mother _____
8. Family Income _____
9. Type of family Joint/Nuclear _____
10. Language spoken by child at home and school _____
11. What health services are rendered at the centre, mention: Yes/No
Frequency in a year
(i) Medical check-up/health care
(ii) Immunization
(iii) Dental check-up
(iv) Weight and height measurement

12 (a) What food supplements (nutrition) are provided at the centre? If yes, mention number of children served (supply the recipes used)

(b) Mention if you provide some specific help in food and nutrition service.

13 What are your expectations from the pre-school centre?

14. Do you visit the centre? Yes/No

(a) If yes, how often - weekly, monthly

(b) If no, why.

(c) When did you last visit the centre? What was the purpose of your visit?

15 Are you satisfied with the ECCE programme implementation? Yes/No

a If yes, why

b If no, why

c. What is appealing in the programme?

16. What suggestions would you like to offer for the improvement of the centre's activities?

1.

2.

3.

17. (a) Does the child feel happy in going to the centre? Yes/No

(b) What support does the child receive from home for the development skills and knowledge?

18. What does the child like the best at the centre?

19. How do you contribute to the management and functioning of the centre?

20. What do you do to mobilize community support?

21. In your opinion, what are the advantages/benefits of a pre-school programme for your child?

22. Please mention 2-3 most appealing/key features of the centre.
- 23(a). Are any local folklore, songs, dance etc. being used in the centre? Yes/No
If yes, specify
- (b) What help do you render for its effective transaction?
- (c) In what ways do you support the ECCE programmes? Specify key approaches as under:
- (i) Transactional mode
 - (ii) Material
 - (iii) Services
 - (iv) Mobilization of community resources for the centre
 - (v) Any other
24. What support do you provide to the child at home for better emotional development at the foundation stage?
25. How is the centre useful for the community?
26. What is your specific contribution towards the effectiveness of the centre?

V. Focus Group Discussions with the Community Members

Date: _____
Time: _____
Place: _____

I. General

- 1 Name and Address of the ECCE centre _____

- 2 Members of the Community in F.G D
Male _____
Female _____

II. Discussion Questions:

- 3 What is the importance of ECCE from the community's perspective?
- 4 What is the contribution of the Community for the efficient functioning of the ECCE centres: -
 - (i) Financial
 - (ii) Maternal
 - (iii) Support to activity sessions.
 - (iv) Services
- 5 What is the role of the Community in planning, management and functioning of the centre?

6. What are the expectations of community from the centre?
7. What efforts have been made by the community in improving the working of ECCE centres? Please discuss under the following:
 - a. Health and cleanliness
 - b. Nutrition
 - c. Conduct of Curricular activities
 - d. Any other
8. How often do you assess the performance of ECCE centres? What changes for improvement have you implemented from time to time?
9. (a) How often does the VEC meet to plan and assess the activities implemented at the ECCE centre?

(b) What other child development issues are discussed with the management in the meetings?
11. What is the perception of an efficient ECCE centre as envisioned by the community? Suggest changes for better function.

12. What are the new thrusts and priorities in future plan of your village / town.
13. Mention the difficulties being faced by ECCE centres and discuss the steps taken to overcome these limitations
14. What type of efforts do you feel childcare centre have planned to enhance the quality of service and inclusion of disadvantaged children.
15. What are the short-term requirements of the ECCE centres of your village /town?
Any suggestion for additional materials and co-ordination of services, for the improvement of the ECCE centres
16. Discuss strengths and weaknesses of the ECCE centres of your village/ town

VI. Observation Schedule for Field Investigator

Date: _____
Time: _____
Place: _____

I. General Information

1. Name of the organization/centre _____
2. Address with contact No. _____

E-Mail _____
Fax _____
Village _____
District _____
State _____
3. Name of the field Investigator _____

II. Location of the centre (Please tick mark)

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| (i) | Site | Rural/urban/tribal |
| (ii) | Building structure | Kachha/Pacca/Semi Pacca |
| (iii) | Space | |
| | (a) Indoor | Adequate/Inadequate |
| | (b) Outdoor | Adequate/Inadequate |
| | (c) Greenery | Available/Not available |
| (iv) | Building | Owned/Rented/Free use |
| (v) | Access of the centre | (a) Easy/Not Easy |
| | | (b) Safe/Not Safe |
| (vi) | Adaptations for special needs children | Adequate/Inadequate |
| (vii) | Main observations (key/innovative features) on above items | |

III. Physical Facilities (Place tick mark)

	Number available	Number usable
(i) Chairs		
(ii) Tables		
(iii) Desks		
(iv) Containers		
(v) Durries		
(vi) Mats		
(vii) Almirah		
(viii) Boxes		
(ix) Fans		
(x) Lights		
(xi) Ventilation		
(xii) Drinking Water		Adequate/Inadequate
(xiii) Wash basin		Adequate/Inadequate
(xiv) Toilets		Adequate/Inadequate
(xv) Main observations (Innovative features) on the arrangement of physical facilities and their settings.		

IV. Games Equipments/Play Material

(a) Outdoor

(i) Swings	(a) Available/Not available (b) Used/not used
(ii) See-saw	(a) Available/Not available (b) Used/not used
(iii) Sliders	(a) Available/Not available (b) Used/not used
(iv) Water-play	(a) Available/Not available (b) Used/not used
(v) Sand play	(a) Available/Not available (b) Used/not used
(vi) Rubber rings and balls	(a) Available/Not available (b) Used/not used

- (vii) Soft clay (a) Available/Not available
(b) Used/not used
- (viii) Animal House (a) Available/Not available
(b) Used/not used
- (ix) Plants /Trecs/Flowers (Tick mark if available)
- (ix) Main observations
- (Play material used/its design/Teacher's resourcefulness)

(b) Indoor Equipments (Tick mark)

- (i) Toys (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/Occasionally used/Not used
- (ii) Picture Books (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/Occasionally used/Not used
- (iii) Picture cards /scrap book (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/Occasionally used/Not used
- (iv) Chart /flash cards (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/Occasionally used/Not used
- (v) Colour Blocks/cubes (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/Occasionally used/Not used
- (iv) Musical Instruments (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/Occasionally used/Not used
- (vi) Drawing and Painting Materials (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/Occasionally used/Not used
- (v) Games & Puzzles (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/Occasionally used/Not used
- (vi) Colour Mixture (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/occasionally used/Not used
- (vii) Tapes and Recorders (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/occasionally used/Not used
- (vii) Masks (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/occasionally used/Not used
- (viii) Costumes (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/occasionally used/Not used

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (ix) Plastic Tools | (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/occasionally used/Not used |
| (x) Puppets | (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/occasionally used/Not used |
| (xi) Carom board | (a) Available/Not available
(b) Appropriately used/occasionally used/Not used |

V. Classroom Organization (Tick mark)

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (i) Seating Arrangement | (a) Small group (4-5 Children)
(b) Large group/circle/semi Circle/rows/flexible
(c) Any other |
| (ii) Classroom Environment | (a) Warm/Friendly
(b) Pleasant/Unpleasant
(c) Democratic/Rigid
(d) Tidy/Untidy |
| (iii) Classroom interactive display | Wall painting/Decoration of walls/Maps/Charts/
Children's Drawing /Any other |
| (iv) Any learning corners/Specify its items and setting | |
| (v) Observation (key features of departure) on classroom setting | |

VI. Curriculum Transaction

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Initiation of the Activity | Direct/Indirect |
| 2 Children's Participation | Passive Listener/Active participant |
| 3 Teacher's Behavior (tick mark) | |
| (i) Cheerful/dull | |
| (ii) Democratic/Authoritative | |
| (iii) Friendly/Unfriendly | |
| (iv) Supportive/Unsupportive | |
| (v) Affectionate/Not affectionate | |
| (vi) Academic - (focus on learning process of thematic approach) | |
| (vii) Social - (ways of dialoguing) | |
| (viii) Observation | |
| (ix) Any other | |

4. Use of Material
- (i) Blackboard/boards used by teacher Yes/no
- (ii) Blackboard/boards used by children (a) Yes/no
(b) accessible/not accessible
- (iii) Display boards (a) available/not available
(b) used/not used
(c) variety/no variety
5. Teaching-learning Material (a) being used/not being used
(b) supports /curricular learning/
does not support
- Specify TLM used -
- (a) Developed by Teacher
- (b) Children's Collections
- (c) Observation (item nos 3-5)
6. Activities by Children Teacher-directed/Child- directed/flexible
- (a) Daily /Weekly plan of work Available/Not available
- If yes, how

If no, why

7(a) Record the observations in the table.

(Attach record sheet)

Day & Time	Activity Observed	Indoor/Outdoor	Type of development	Comments (Teacher directed/child initiated/child participatory mode)

7(b) Frequency of outdoor visits/activities

(c) Teacher's role

8 Reinforcement by the teacher (Tick mark)

(a) Recognizes

(b) Achievement/ Pat/Applause

(c) Stars/Stickers

9 Participative Learning

Being done/not being done

10 Questioning by the teacher

Being done/not being done

11 Questioning by the children

being encouraged/not being encouraged

12 Audio-visual aids

being used/not being used

13 Motivation

taken care/not taken care

14 Evaluation/Assessment

being done/not being done

15 Teacher's Movement

no movement/need based movement/
free movement

16 Observation (items nos. 8-15)

VI. Children's Behavior (Tick mark)

- | | | |
|-------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (i) | Etiquette | Proper/Improper |
| (ii) | Behaviour with peer group | Cooperative/not cooperative
Sharing/Non-sharing
Friendly/hostile |
| (iii) | Children's role | Participatory/Non-participatory |
| (iv) | Observation (item numbers i-iii) | |

VII. Display of the Centre (Tick mark)

- | | | |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| (i) | Outdoor (setting) | adequate/inadequate |
| (ii) | Wall-painting | adequate/inadequate |
| (iii) | Wall messages | adequate/inadequate |
| (iv) | Indoor (Classroom arrangements) | adequate/inadequate |
| (v) | Play material Developed | by children/by the
teacher/sharing mode |
| (vi) | Any other | |
| (vii) | Main observations (Innovative features) on centre settings | |
| (viii) | Record appealing elements of the quality of interventions used and effective classroom practices | |

LIST OF ORGANISATIONS

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Acc. No. F-23378
Date